SCIENTIFIC EDITORS:
TITUS CORLĂȚEAN
IOAN-GHEORGHE ROTARU

THE FUTURE
OF
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PROCEEDINGS OF HARVARD SQUARE SYMPOSIUM

Scientific Press

The twenty-first century ushered mankind into adventurous, exciting, but challenging new horizons. The new power of computation led to colossal advances in genetics, space exploration, and quantum physics—just to name a few—while the power of human imagination reached new summits. At the same time, mankind faces threats posed by increased competition over resources, military rivalries, economic imbalance, environmental depletion, demographic growth, terrorism, wars and migration. Therefore, the goal of this series of conferences is to reunite promising and well established scholars in a creative environment, to propose holistic ways of thinking by nurturing the engagement of the global intellectual elite into conversations meant to tackle the new challenges faced by the mankind. It is a conversation which attempts to go beyond the existing paradigms of thinking. The invited participants include university professors, graduate students, researchers, scientists and practitioners from every field of inquiry.

SCIENTIFIC EDITORS

Titus Corlățean is a diplomat, politician, legal scholar and educator; currently serving as a Romanian Senator and Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law of "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University in Bucharest, Romania. Between 2012 and 2014 he served as Minister of Justice and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Romanian Government. A leading member of the Social Democrat Party, Dr. Corlățean served as an elected member of the European Parliament and taught law at the University of Bucharest. Dr. Corlățean holds a BA and a PhD in Law from the University of Bucharest, as well as advanced studies in International Relations and Diplomacy from the National Institute for Public Administration in Paris, and the National Defense College in Bucharest. He is the author of five books in the field of Human Rights and International Law, and of numerous scientific articles in the fields of law, human rights and post-Soviet secessionism. In 2004 he was awarded the "Star of Romania" National Order in the rank of Knight, and in 2014 he received the National Order of Honor of the Republic of Moldova.

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The Future of Knowledge

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SCIENTIFIC EDITORS

Titus Corlățean

Ioan-Gheorghe Rotaru

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Acknowledgments

Welcome to the first edition of the Harvard Square Symposium—an event organized by the Scientific Press, the Institute for Peace Studies in Eastern Christianity (IPSEC) and the Research Association for Interdisciplinary Studies (RAIS) on April 29–30, 2016. This symposium was held as a private event at the Harvard Faculty Club, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, reuniting academics from the fields of arts and sciences from three continents.

On behalf of the organizing institutions, we wish to express our gratitude and commend all those involved in the realization of this event for their tireless efforts and dedication.

His Excellency, Senator Dr. Titus Corlățean, Romania's Minister of Justice (2012) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (2012–2014), presented the keynote paper at Harvard Faculty Club, and, together with Rev. Dr. Ioan-Gheorghe Rotaru, edited the *Proceedings*. His Excellency, Senator Mihnea Costoiu, Romania's Minister Delegate for Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technological Development (2012–2014), currently president of University Politehnica of Bucharest—offered an inspiring keynote speech to the participants. Invaluable support was offered by Dr. Marian Gh. Simion, IPSEC President and Field Education Supervisor at Harvard Divinity School and Dr. Nelu Burcea, Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard Divinity School.

The theme, "the Future of Knowledge," was suggestively chosen to highlight the mission of our symposia; that of making a valuable contribution to a future of humanity full of hope and trust, keeping in mind that the common responsibilities toward the future generations (which we share across nations, cultures, and beliefs), ought to be symbiotic with our professional ideals in providing good stewardship.

From its inception, the goal of this symposium was to create an environment in which existing and promising scholars—working in the general fields of arts and sciences—can share their knowledge within their respective disciplines and beyond. The environment in which ideas can be exchanged goes beyond the most exclusive

context of a specific discipline, and the intended exchange is set to takes place in relative awareness of the direct and indirect input of other disciplines, with an exclusive influence of attitudes conditioned by a peaceful coexistence and spirituality.

The Scientific Press is part of IPSEC's Round Table consulting program—a program meant to raise awareness on the role of religion for a peaceful coexistence of current and future generations, by providing an environment of symbiotic exchanges between the domains of public policy, business and academia.

We congratulate all contributors for their hard work, cutting-edge research and dedication to making the world a better place.

Beyond the advancement of academics, we hope that our symposia will continue to plant the seeds of trust and hope for a better world.

Denise E. Simion   Viorica Burcea
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INAUGURAL PAPER

INAUGURAL SPEECH

The Future of Knowledge: Current Challenges and Perspectives for International Law

Titus Corlăţean

ABSTRACT: The dynamic of changes of the International Society increased dramatically in the past 50–100 years. Fundamental changes touched also the domain of International Law, as created after 1945 by the relevant international actors through the United Nations, Law which regulates the current international relations. Norms and fundamental principles of International Law, considered for a long time as immutable, are subject of serious challenges generated by new balances of power in the world, the complex process of Globalization, by terrorism, illegal migration etc. Temptations for instance to revert back the fundamental "acquis" of the European Union, such as European integration, fundamental rights and liberties, the moral Judaic–Christian foundation of Europe etc. into an updated version of a Europe of sovereign states on Westphalian model became a reality. The reconfiguration of the Global system and the future of knowledge from this point of view will imply a serious effort for the renewal of the fundamental legal concepts, but mainly a new quality and vision of the international political leadership. For generating once again progress, these changes should nevertheless not renounce to what was fundamentally acquired, to the essential principles and values embodied by the Humanity in the new born post–War society and its International Norms.
KEY WORDS: knowledge; international society; International Law; international relations; UN Charter; European Union; USA; Russia; predictability; challenges; terrorism; refugees; changes.

The thirst for knowledge represents human being's inner need which prompted mankind to seeking progress and allowed it

to evolve. Or to regress, depending on how it understood to use its discoveries. Regardless of whether such thirst for knowledge was based on philosophical, religious, social progress or political ideas, it could always survive in a context of freedom of thought as an inherent dimension of the human being, whether acknowledged or not in the domestic or international laws throughout various historical periods, permitted or restricted in its expression outside human being, but at all times very much alive within.

The dynamics of mankind's evolution cannot be possibly compared to what was known only 50 or 100 years ago. The speed of sound is now considered a merely modest reference if we think of the speed of communication via Internet. A fourth industrial revolution is currently mentioned—a revolution of knowledge—of the instant exchange of information and data, of the penetration of advanced technologies in our day to day life.[1] The phrase "the future starts today" has been replaced with "the future is already here."[2] All this testifies in brief that the pace of changes triggered by knowledge, research and innovation runs infinitely faster than it did at the dawn of the "modern international society."

From this perspective, a distinct realm is that of the international regulations of the global society, in other words the Public International Law, a domain traditionally considered essential for the stability, peace and progress of the international society and a branch of the Law having gone through substantial transformations and evolutions over the last 70 years, after the WWII. Such evolutions witnessed the introduction of UN Charter and the establishment of the United Nations Organization, the adoption of certain fundamental principles of the International Law which, *inter alia*, confirmed the exclusion of any aggression and war from the accepted legitimate means for settling international disputes, the adoption on 10 December 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of an entire set of international universal or regional conventions enshrining and safeguarding the human fundamental rights and freedoms, among which, at European level, a special importance being placed on the European Convention on Human Rights and the jurisdictional mechanism considered to be the most effective in this field, namely the European Court of Human

Rights,[3] the establishment of the International Humanitarian Law and so on.

To what extent is today's International Law exposed to this precipitated dynamics of change? Is it still in line with the political, social and global security developments? What is the actual impact of today's geopolitical developments on the International Law?

In order to provide answers, one must understand the specificity of the International Law. Generally, international rules are built to govern international relationships, to establish mandatory rules, rights and obligations for the subjects of International Law (states, international organizations and, more and more often lately, individuals), but also for the non-state entities, in order to establish what is permitted and what is forbidden.[4] Its emergence, existence and amendment are prompted by material and social factors such as social conscience, international public opinion, international habits or customary practices being ultimately expressed in writing in the form of international treaties resulting from a process of codification of what may often be deemed as already representing an unwritten rule applied in practice for some time. International rules may be codified in writing also due to the need to govern new or ongoing international realities, which at times are either positive (e.g. spatial law regulation), or negative (e.g. countering international terrorism; prohibition of anti-personal mines etc).

In a classical monograph of International Law, Ian Brownlie reminds us of the distinction drawn in the relevant international doctrine between the sources or material sources of International Law (social and material conditions triggering the emergence of Law) and the formal sources (actual legal forms taken by rules of international law in international treaties, international customary practices, case law of international courts of justice etc.)[5] It is an established fact that including in the formal sources of International Law the regulatory needs naturally deriving from the material sources above takes some time to be contemplated and assimilated by the law–making political factor, and objectively involves a time gap between the emergence of the need for international regulation and the actual codification of the International Law. The specificity of international regulations requiring the states' laborious unification

of wills, nurturing different interests and evaluations, explains the length and complexity of the process of negotiation in respect of the adoption of a new international treaty. Apart from this, there is the opposition between Law and politics in international which more than once were conflicted due to the temptation to favor the "law of the force" over the "force of the Law," and then there is also the partial overlapping between the International Law and the International Morality,[6] in order to understand that international rules have a rather conservative nature. The codification process may require time and international political effort to reach a compromise and for this reason there is a tendency towards its stability and predictability. Such conservative nature was in our view fully justified for a long period of time after the War but it is obviously becoming an impediment in the context of contemporary exceptional dynamics, setting many of the current international regulatory mechanisms and systems into opposition with the need for a more rapid alignment of the International Law to the present realities and particularly to the future perspectives.

It therefore clearly follows that *the history of international relations faced and still faces a gap and even a hiatus between mutations, repositioning of certain centers of international power, between the reconfiguration of international geopolitical balances and the evolution of International Law, the emergence of the new rules governing such international relationships. The evolution of international relationships, the knowledge of future developments achieved through the assessment of the political, economic and security etc. interests of major international players, brings forward the adoption of new international rules.* From this perspective, one may find interesting the analysis provided by the contemporary doctrine[7] on the relationship between Diplomacy and International Law. Traditionally, Diplomacy, operating at the borders between Politics and Law and between the domestic needs and interests of the states and an explanation thereof by means of an international language, namely the language of International Law, is used by the states with a view to promoting and presenting their international interests and conducts as founded on the rules of International Law. This is because the power of International Law, universally

established after 1945, generally determines the states to make use of it instead of entering into a conflict with it. In practice, a series of examples are known in the international relationships of the latest decades where the states were tempted to comply with their own interpretation of the International Law and not necessarily with the original meaning of the rules which allowed the own interests of such states and ad–hoc interpretations to gradually and formally become new rules of International Law. The Diplomacy promoted by the states in terms of the prevalence in particular circumstances of the Politics over the Law has led to the reinterpretation of the rules in the field of humanitarian interventions, which are more broadly understood as having a legal basis despite the limitations imposed by the concept of state sovereignty, prohibition of war or other limitations originally enforced in the UN Charter.[8]

Therefore, there is a *fundamental change of the concept of knowledge in contemporary international relationships. The original objective established under the UN Charter, to know, to understand and to peacefully use the future international phenomena within stable, predictable parameters regulated under the rules of International Law is transformed by the accelerated developments and dynamics of contemporary international society, that is the realities, the new power relationships, the tough competition in a world marked by scarcity lead to a reinterpretation of the Law making the knowledge of the international regulatory reality and of the rules governing the evolution of international society more unpredictable and thus more difficult.* We are basically in the presence of *a disruption of the international system which diminishes its predictability in the face of the well–known world economic crises, severe security crises generated by a level of terrorism not known before by mankind, such as ISIS/DAESH or the conflicts in Middle East or Eastern Europe (Ukraine/Russian Federation), the increase of the economic and social polarization between the world regions or the waves of refugees or the illegal immigration encountered in Europe or in certain countries of the extended Middle East region.* All these factors make the future world architecture and the new international rules infinitely more difficult to understand. It is not a coincidence that we currently witness a fiercer competition or an increased gap

within the framework generously regulated by the international rules for the progress of humanity, between the positive and the negative use of knowledge, as it is the case of cybernetics which has revolutionized the contemporary world and the cybernetic war aggressively promoted lately by states or non-state entities. The same considerations apply to the exploitation of the outer space, either for peaceful reasons or for military conflicts, the freedom of thought or of religion, applied either to achieve beneficial or detrimental purposes etc. We are ultimately in the presence of a new world order, not reasonably defined yet, which exited long ago the bipolar system of power (which offered however stability to international society despite the cyclical tensions between the two relevant power players), has gone beyond the unipolar system represented by the USA and is currently facing several types of challenges directed at the player mentioned by different state entities (Russia, China etc) or non-state entities (mainly characterized by terrorism). And again it is not a coincidence that within this process of configuration of the new world order, there is an increased renunciation of the traditional role of Diplomacy understood as highly stable and institutionalized, skilful at negotiations and mediations, respectful towards international rules and steadfast in the face of change in international environment, in favor of a Diplomacy reflecting the redistribution of Power in international environment and currently using new practices based less on the rules of Law and more on the rules deriving from the new balances of Power.[9]

To have a true and fair view of the serious challenges that the current international system is facing it may be useful to provide a few relevant examples.

For the international Law system built after 1945, the observance of sovereignty, territorial integrity and states independence constituted one of the fundamental principles which allowed for no derogation. Such principle was provided in the United Nations Charter[10] and was supplemented by the obligation to "maintain international peace and security," defined simultaneously by the same Charter as Purpose and Principle,[11] by the Principle to "settle international disputes by peaceful means"[12] and by the Principle to "refrain from the threat or use of force."[13]

Subsequently, international treaties or other fundamental political documents reaffirmed or enriched[14] these fundamental principles of contemporary International Law. In this regard, the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine started in 2014 sanctioning the illegal attachment of Crimea, a territory pertaining to the sovereign state of Ukraine, could have been hardly predicted, given that such military action took place in a 21st century Europe, a Europe based on values and principles, unable to conceive of a possible outbreak of a new war in contemporary times. The violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a European state, Ukraine, member of the European Council and associated to the European Union through a permanent member of the Security Council posed a huge challenge to the international legality and the state of international peace and security enshrined as a Purpose of the UN Charter. The motivation offered by Moscow, among others, was Russia's "serious concern" for the "fate" of its Russian co-nationals, citizens of Ukraine, who would have suffered a "repressive treatment" by the new power in Kiev installed after the popular revolution which ended in bloodshed in Kiev's Maidan and had a pro-European orientation. Russia has claimed a right of international interference in favor of its co-nationals who lived in another state, a right which however is not provided in the International Law. The actual and well–known reason obviously departs from the claimed reason and concerns in fact Russia's geopolitical interests, thoroughly tested by the strategic reorientation of Ukraine towards the European Union, but also Moscow's desire to get a higher profile as a new important global player able to challenge and destabilize the American international "leadership." The reaction of the western and democratic world, initially cohesive and coherent in condemning the Russian political and military action, was materialized by qualifying the attachment of Crimea as an "aggression."[15] It is worth while mentioning in this context, as an irony of history, that the first definition of the term "aggression" in International Law was stipulated in the 1933 London Protocol on defining international aggression at the proposal of the Romanian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Nicolae Titulescu (twice elected President of the League of Nations in 1930 and 1931), a proposal co-initiated by the Commissar

for Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R, M. Litvinov. Moreover, this treaty is also known as Litvinov–Titulescu Protocol. Mention should be made that 80 years after the essential contribution of the Soviet Moscow' Minister for Foreign Affairs to the international legal condemnation of aggression, Vladimir Putin's Moscow is condemned internationally as aggressor for the exact same type of actions incriminated in 1933. The condemnation of the Russian aggression against Ukraine was followed by a discontinuation of the cooperation between the European Union and NATO on the one hand and the Russian Federation on the other hand, as well as by the enforcement of a mechanism of political and economic sanctions meant to determine the Russian authorities to refrain from occupying a foreign territory. In practical terms, two years after the Russian military action, the reaction of the democratic international society for the restoration of certain fundamental principles of International Law was actually ineffective. Moreover, Russia succeeded in dividing the European states,[16] which act inconsistently in respect of the continuation of the sanctions imposed by the EU, due to their specific political and economic interests in their relationship with Moscow. This obviously leads gradually to a consolidation of Russia's *de facto* authority over Crimea and to the idea that a change of borders by military force in the 21st century is possible. The *conclusion* that follows is that *the very foundation of the International Law, which previously had an undisputed reputation in the international society, neither allowed a prediction related to the prevalence of force over the rule nor was it able to prevent a violation of the International Law or lead to the reinstatement of the international lawfulness, at least so far.* This means that the *process of knowledge and understanding of the manner in which the international relations are developing in the contemporary society lost the predictability previously provided by the established framework of the basic rules of International Law.*

A second illustration relevant in our view, concerns the European Union typology, its evolution in the past decades and the deep changes triggered by the multiple challenges posed nowadays which complicate the path to uncovering the future political, strategic and regulatory profile of the European Union. In other words, the direction it has embarked upon.

It is widely known that the European project known as the European Union is part of a Westphalian legacy, that is a Westphalian world of sovereign states bordered by frontiers.[17] It is this world which invented International Law in Europe and spread it worldwide, a Law that was and still is, by and large, a Law of the states, conceived by the states and created for the purpose of regulating inter-state relationships.[18] The same Europe moved on however, in two major stages, towards the Political Project of a united Europe, originally, after 1945 in the West–European area, prompted by the Founding Fathers of the European Communities, and subsequently, after the fall of the Communist system in Central and Eastern European as well. The concept of a federal Europe based on a system of shared democratic values, thorough domestic integration and international opening, has been supported for decades in particular owing also to the outcome of the globalisation process which makes the international society ever less Westphalian.[19] However, despite the decades of promoting the integration of the institutions, of political and economic decision–making mechanisms and of domestic markets, despite the worldwide expansion and the outline of a profile aspiring towards unity, the severe shocks and challenges that the European Union is facing lately revealed the bounds and even the steps back it has to take in the European construct, the selfishness we thought long buried of the European states and which surface now as alive as ever. The Treaty of Lisbon signed in 2007 pointed out the inability of a "united Europe" to decide, for instance, on the creation of a genuine common foreign and security policy, a common defence policy, the appointment of a proper EU minister for foreign affairs and of a foreign service and so on. The dilemma of a perpetual cruising between an integrated and supranational Europe and the preservation of certain distinct prerogatives of the sovereign states, between the "EU" and the "inter–government" method had not been yet topped in 2007, in times of peace. Therefore, it is all the more easier to imagine that now, in times of "war", at a time when the trend of reinstating the Westphalian sovereign system of the states is clearly revealed, the future knowledge of where a united Europe would head for is growing ever more complicated or rather unpredictable.

Under the circumstances, there is legitimacy in the following questions raised by the present–day political, economic, security and value crises EU has to face and to which there are no coherent answers yet meant to safeguard the future of the European project:

— Does International Humanitarian Law still operate today in the times of atypical military conflicts? And this reference includes both the hybrid war fought by Russia in South–Eastern Ukraine and before that in Crimea, but also to the bloodshed warfare in Syria, Libya, Iraq etc.;

— Is the limitation of the fundamental human rights and freedoms as they have been understood and promoted for decades in the European area a realistic solution in the light of the fight against terrorism? And what is more, a terrorism which has, in truth, turned more sophisticated and more "domestic" due to the inflow of "foreign terrorist fighters"[20] and, consequently, more difficult to combat than the "international" one;

— Does International Humanitarian Law still operate in the light of mass migration phenomenon in the European area? Can we still count on the freedom of movement from the inside of the European Union between the member states as on a fundamental right? How far do the limitations of International Humanitarian Law go in the nowadays practice of the states against the uncovered and far more unbending prerogatives of the concept of sovereignty? All these questions are raised in a context where the system of International Humanitarian Law which did not seem to ever be susceptible to change, beginning with the 1949 Geneva Conventions,[21] is "frozen" by the very European "progressive" states, while lots of individuals in a desperate run for their lives and away from bloodbath conflicts of Syria or Libya are turned by European politicians from "refugees" into "illegal immigrants," with all treatments enforced on them, as it is the case of the well–known Agreement executed in March 2016 between the European Union and Turkey;

—Which is the legal, political or moral solution to the tension between the right of the refugees or the asylum seekers to the protection of their own cultural identity and the necessity of the host states to protect the cultural identity of its their own societies and citizens?

—How up to date can the previously established system of European values be anymore, beginning with the moral Christian–Jewish foundation of the European society?[22] An illustration of international notoriety has been recently offered by a restrictive or even repressive practice promoted—however surprising as it may be—by Norway, an European country with a long and established constitutional and democratic tradition and for a long while now acknowledged as a Christian country, namely by the child welfare service of Norway—Barnevernet, which had a brutal and abusive intervention by taking away children from their natural parents to place them in foster care to "surrogate families," all in the name of certain concerns regarding an education model labelled as "radically Christian and indoctrinating" which the parents were said to resort to against their own children.[23] This situation actually emphasizes a manifest violation of the freedom of thought and religion and equally of the inviolability of one's private and family life as such are guaranteed in all international treaties of Human Rights or even in the Norwegian domestic laws, violations which occur in a lay society which shows articulate signs of fundamentalist secularisation.

What this analysis aims at is obviously to catch a snapshot view of the present day and moreover, of international society's outlooks. We are living *in times of deep turmoil and unrest which cast their dramatic mark on the system of international relationships changing it from what it used to be after 1945 when it was created. The stability and predictability of this system vouched for under the great political decisions made after the WWII within the United Nations or at a regional level, as it was the case of the European continent, but also the international regulatory architecture and the great fundamental principles of International Law, are put through the mill today while the solutions to be found will definitely require an effort of concept*

innovation and codification in terms of law. Such legal changes could only reach a positive outcome if proper political endeavours are put into the process which means powerful political leaders promoting a political vision capable of generating progression and not regression, enhanced solidarity and reduced selfishness. It is a fact that for quite a while now Europe has faced a deficit in terms of vision and political "leadership" as the leaders nominated by the European nations in the latest elections may hardly equal the "Founding Fathers" of the united Europe. *The future of knowledge of the international society and its new rules seems rather prone to uncertainties and numerous challenges generating dilemmas and difficulties. Mankind however has always found resources for progress. What is of the essence for the future is for the same Mankind to be wise and strong enough to not surrender its fundamental assets gained throughout its evolution, core principles and values presently pervading the international rules which were also conceived in times of trouble when the international society regained its breath after the most terrible and bloody world war ever known to mankind.*

NOTES

[1] Adrian Stanciu, *The future is already here*, 16. 02.2016, Cariereonline.ro

[2] Adrian Stanciu, op. cit., quoting the Canadian essayist William Gibson

[3] Titus Corlăţean, *European and International Protection of Human Rights*, Second Edition. Revised. (Bucharest: Universul Juridic, 2015), 92.

[4] Malcom N. Shaw, *International Law*, Sixth Edition. Third printing. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1.

[5] Ian Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law*, Fourth Edition. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 1–3.

[6] Shaw, 2–4.

[7] Ian Hurd, "International Law and the Politics of Diplomacy," in *Diplomacy and the Making of World Politics*, (Cambridge Studies in International Relations) Ed. Ole Jacob Sending, et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 31–54.

[8] Ibid., 43

[9] Ole Jacob Sending, Vincent Pouliot and Iver B. Neumann, "Introduction, Diplomacy and the Making of World Politics," in Ole Jacob Sending., Ibid., 21.

[10] "Article 2.4. "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political

independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations." See: https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CTC/uncharter.pdf (Last accessed on April 26, 2016)

[11] "CHAPTER I PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES Article 1 The Purposes of the United Nations are: 1. To maintain international peace and security.."; "Article 2 The Organization and its Members, in pursuit of the Purposes stated in Article 1, shall act in accordance with the following Principles: ..3.. in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered." See: https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CTC/uncharter.pdf (Last accessed on April 26, 2016)

[12] "Article 2.3 All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means." See: https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CTC/uncharter.pdf (Last accessed on April 26, 2016.)

[13] "Article 2.4 All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force." See: https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CTC/uncharter.pdf (Last accessed on April 26, 2016)

[14] The principle of "inviolability of frontiers," "CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND CO–OPERATION IN EUROPE FINAL ACT HELSINKI 1975 , . . . Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States The participating States: . . . III. Inviolability of frontiers—The participating States regard as inviolable all one another's frontiers as well as the frontiers of all States in Europe and therefore they will refrain now and in the future from assaulting these frontiers. Accordingly, they will also refrain from any demand for, or act of, seizure and usurpation of part or all of the territory of any participating State." See: http://www.osce.org/mc/39501?download=true (Last accessed on April 26, 2016)

[15] Council conclusions on Ukraine—FOREIG AFFAIRS Council meeting Brussels, 3 March 2014—The Council adopted the following conclusions: "1. The European Union strongly condemns the clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by acts of aggression by the Russian armed forces as well as the authorization given by the Federation Council of Russia on 1 March for the use of the armed forces on the territory of Ukraine. These actions are in clear breach of the UN Charter and the OSCE Helsinki Final Act, as well as of Russia's specific commitments to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 and the bilateral Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership of 1997 . . ." See: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/141291.pdf (Last accessed on April 26, 2016)

[16] Maxime Lefebvre, *La politique etrangere europeenne*, 2-e edition. (Paris: Presse Universitaire de France, 2016), 55.

[17] Lefebvre, 5–8.

[18] Ibid., 8.

[19] Ibid., 12.

[20] Ibid., 5–8.

[21] Ibid., 8.

[22] Lex Ahdar and Ian Leigh, *Religious Freedom in the Liberal State*, Second Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 139–145, 282–297.

[23] Bodnariu Case (father—Romanian, mother—Norwegian, 5 underage children with dual citizenship Romanian—Norwegian), a family attending a Christian Neo–Protestant Church and residing in Norway; See: https://www.facebook.com/Norway-Return-the-children-to-Bodnariu-Family-744234959015965/?fref=nf; http://bodnariufamily.org/ (Last accessed on April 26, 2016)

Cutting Through Illusions

Mihnea Costoiu

As it is apparent, Einstein fascinates our world more so today than he did when his first discoveries became known to the world of scientists. He fascinates our world not necessarily for his unusual intelligence, but more so for his attitude toward knowledge in general. Unsatisfied by the trendy Newtonianism of his time, Einstein was the rebel who went against the beaten path of conformity with the status quo. This is an undeniable fact.

Sometimes it is difficult to assess whether his discoveries are more important than his courage to think differently.

Undoubtedly, one must indeed possess intelligence and courage. Yet, it is the spirit of rebelliousness against conformity with the status quo that reserves remarkable surprises for the progress of humanity. The spirit of rebellious courage pushes humanity toward new horizons, and in Einstein's case, one can easily claim that his courage inspired the driving forces that changed and continue to change our world. The current society of information is a revelation in progress which in many ways continues to defy human logic. Nevertheless, with its yet-to-be-explored impact upon the human being, the society of information not only stimulates human imagination and creativity. Ironically, it opens the doors toward a new world of spiritual awakening and consciousness, where empirical science becomes a most trusted ally of religion. Candace Pert's research on neuropeptides, and Masaru Emoto's

ability to demonstrate the imprint of human consciousness upon water crystals are clear indicators.

Out of this laboratory of the mind, the future of knowledge remains as fascinating as unpredictable.

This international series of conferences organized by the Scientific Press together with the Institute for Peace Studies in Eastern Christianity is a match that promises to go beyond the simple conversation between the spiritual world and the world of empirical science. It promises to stimulate a challenge for cross-fertilization between the world of information and the world of consciousness, where spirit and matter—once polarized by the Descartian dualism of Western Civilization—no longer afford to portray each other as a deceiving suspect. In fact, as it is evident, the world of spirit and the world of matter begin to recognize each other as a common denominator in seeking to understand the Great Unknown. They do so fully aware that humanity can prosper only if the human beings are no longer separated by national borders, languages, stereotypes and self imposed illusions.

But, the world of information not only accelerates the development of science and technology. It also makes possible, at a very large scale, the development of artistic imagination through sound and image. The ability to delve deeply into the atom (ironically a+tomos, or the "indivisible" particle of matter that the Greek philosophers thought to exist), or the ability blast into space and gaze at the universe in search for inhabitable places, are nothing more than launching pads towards the future of knowledge.

Therefore, I congratulate the organizers for their initiative and wish success to all those involved in sharing their research.

SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES

Imagery and Fantasy
in Dimitrie Anghel's Poetry

Cosmina Andreea Roşu

ABSTRACT: Dimitrie Anghel is a remarkable Romanian symbolist for his special approach to the flower universe, especially for his frequent identification with floral element considered to be the avatar of the poetic. At the beginning of the 20th century Dimitrie Anghel's lyrical creation has the merit of contributing to the development of Romanian lyricism by communicating the message through all the senses and his prose proves its modernity by resizing his contribution to the extension of Romanian literature in the European context. The escape in the garden—as a space of withdrawal in ideal, it is achieved through dream, in a symbolic way, abundant in expressive images. The representation of an identity discourse, the dream suggests the space of a human being originating retrieval through continuous metamorphoses, a space of human souls' transmigration.
KEY WORDS: symbol, aesthetic, poem, fantasy, flower.

In the assertion of the naturalistic novel and of the Parnassian poetry among the positivist philosophy of Auguste Comte, in the industrial development era, in the second half of the 19th century (1860–1880), a unitary and expressive French movement arise, that is named *Symbolism*. This suddenly expands in the entire Europe and knows outstanding representatives even among the Romanian poets. Yet from the beginning, foreign poets participated at this literary trend: Greeks as Jean Moreas, the nickname for Papadiamantopulos, Flemish as Rodenbach, Maeterlink, Verhaeren,

Max Elskamp, Albert Mockel and Van Lebergue, Anglo–Saxons as Stuart Merril and Francis Viele–Griffin, Jewish as Gustave Kahn and Ephraim Mikhael, Spanish as Armand Godoy, the Italian Gabriele D'Annunzio, the English Oscar Wilde and the Romanian Alexandru Macedonski (collaborator of one of the first magazines of the trend, „La Wallonie.")

Then, the exponents of French symbolism meet in different national literatures: Ștefan George, Hofmannsthal and Rainer Maria Rilke, in Germany, William Butler Yeats in Ireland, Swinburne, Arthur Symonds, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Edgar Allan Poe, in England, Ververy in Holland, D'Annunzio in Italy, Machado brothers, Ramon del Valle Inclan and Juan Ramon Jimenez, in Spain, Constantin Balmont, Valeriu Briusov, Alexandru Block, in Russia, Ady Endre, in Hungary, Kostis Palamas in Greece, Tuwim, in Poland, Alexandru Macedonski, Dimitrie Anghel, Ion Minulescu and George Bacovia, in Romania.

The trend is theorized by Jean Moreas and it is named according to an article—programme/ manifest, "Le Symbolisme," that was published in the French paper "Le Figaro," in 1886. This becomes the literary and aesthetic programme of this trend. In the same year was formed the group that named itself *symbolist* and it was headed by the poet Stephane Mallarme, and Rene Ghil founded the *symbolist–harmonist* school that became the *philosophic–instrumentalist* school.

The poets that considered Paul Verlaine the Head of the school were calling themselves *decadents* as a gesture of defiance. They were represented by Arthur Rimbaud, Tristan Corbière, Jules Laforgue. Nevertheless, the Decadents was considered no more than anticlimax, a simple pastiche of the old models, a copy of the eminescian pattern, showing reticence to the new and not an innovation.

Being mainly lyric, Symbolism had a propensity for poetry and contaminated with its lyricism also the prose and the symbolist theatre.

Because of the powerful desire of reacting against ordinary places and surfeit of emotions of the Romantics, the Parnassians have reached the antipode: to a real coldness and inflexibility,

without the lyric core, spiritless; to a formal and tedious virtuosity. Moreas, one of the founders of Symbolism, created a Symbolist Roman school that started just from the desire to protest against the surfeit of Symbolist's poetry; "lyric and spiritual, melodious an innermost, it was a matter-of-course to rise as an objection against the bourgeois' materialism, represented in literature by the surfeits of the Naturalist novel and the sheer graphic formalism of Parnassian poetry. . . . Any new literary movement starts with a release and ends with a dogma."[1]

Symbolism, as the Parnassian and the Romanticism, didn't have a spontaneous generation. During the Romanticism, Gerard de Nerval, in his Symbolist sonnets with Symbolist titles ("Les Chymeres"), foreshadows Baudelaire and Malarme or Verlaine. The Symbolism "had an origination period of almost half a century."[2] This implies "a new reincarnation of the poetic myth that anchoress now on the realm of sheer lyric, of intuition and dream, of the melody and suggestion."[3]

Many of the poets in that period started to write this manner long before the emergence of the groups they acceded. The Symbolism' forerunner is considered to be the French poet Charles Baudelaire through his poetry, "Correspondances," that had the most powerful influence on the development of the Symbolist lyric (since 1857, from the first edition of "Fleurs du Mal"—"the true poetic art of Symbolism;"[4] and in which he achieves, for the first time, techniques that are considered to be Symbolists. In this sonnet we can find, "almost 20 years before, the entire programme of the new lyric"[5] and is created here "the new framing of the Symbolist poetry"[6] having "a combination of the familiar with the symbolic."[7] Baudelaire communicates his poetic programme "through all the senses, . . . the poetry of fragrance . . . with blends and interpretation of symbols."[8]

The innovation consists in Baudelaire's and symbolists' meaningful contribution. Ion Pillat considers Mallarme to be "the Socrates of Symbolism."

The remarkable power of spiritual suggestion is realized by introducing some notions of texture, flavor, fragrance, tactile sensations, symbols from the musical area and also some old

qualities concerning the verse's colour and harmony—"the music and the poetry are only the alternative sides of one certitude: the Idea . . . —the elementary reality."[9] The music and the poetry interpenetrate each other, remaining contaminated by one another.

The first verses were chants with musical accompaniment— the word "lyric" comes from "lira" and confirms the instrumental origin. The innovation of Mallarme consists in the fact that he "didn't try to replace an exterior accompaniment with an organic collaboration as in the Wagnerian drama," but he "claimed to incorporate again the music in the midst of the words, brought again, to their real lyric meaning, that cannot be less than symbolic and musical, through a subtle and specific syntax of the poet— strange and misunderstood fantasy of a lunatic."[10]

Romanian Symbolism is considered to be, by some men of letters, a trend that has arisen as a reaction to the rhetoric Parnassian and to Naturalism promoting the concept of modern poetry. However, to a closer look at the literature of that era, the Symbolism appears to be more a reaction to the eminescian followers and to the semanatorist ideology. This literary trend takes from the previous schools all that fitted with the restless and eager soul of its representatives. These wanted to offer the undiscovered and are more nimble to the novelty in domains as: drawing, music, philosophy, science, arts in general. The Symbolists make the effort to enlarge the poetry's theme by exploiting the urban universe, to renew the lyric expression. Thus, the Romanian poets proved to be very receptive to the French influence—France was the place where the renewal of the poetry's fundamental happened.

Romanian Symbolism doesn't need to be interpreted as a copy of the French one because it was perceived at the same time and converted gradually, developed according to social reality, the spiritual context and inland sensitivity with the actual evolution of Romanian literature. It is a profound and original dimension, adapted to our national singularity under "the fundamental of the creative influence, which doesn't dry, but only fructifies the own virtuality."[11]

In Romania the Symbolism is in recorded together with the advent of "Literatorul," in 1880, under the guidance of Alexandru Macedonski. The Romanian Symbolist trend is a heterogeneal one and is remarkable through its representants: Ştefan Petică, Iuliu Cezar Săvescu, Dimitrie Anghel, Ion Minulescu, G. Bacovia, D. Iacobescu, I. M. Raşcu, Emil Isac, Al. T. Stamatiad, N. Davidescu, Elena Farago, M. Cruceanu, Demostene Botez, Barbu Fundoianu.

The source of Symbolism is found in Romanian poetry preceding this literary trend—especially in Mihai Eminescu's poetry, a poet that followed the German romantic school and he embraces in his poetry a musicality similar with the Symbolist one („Melancolie," „Se bate miezul nopţii".) Thus we can conclude that one of the Symbolism's origins is the German Romanticism, the music of Wagner (through Ovid Densusianu), the impressionistic drawings (through Monet's school) the romance and the eminescian musicality which develops sensations.

Symbolism is repelled in all the papers of that time and done for; it is declared antisocial. Titu Maiorescu himself notes that Symbolist poets have the sickness of creating new; a futurism which does not include "the core of the classical beauty" and considers that the town poetry is artificial, external, with a lack of profound and authenticity of the village's poetry, which is an internal one. Sometimes Symbolism was considered to be eccentric.

A peculiarity of Romanian Symbolism is the fact that the subject of its denial was not a certain literary-artistic movement as it was said, but rather the fake art or, as the Symbolists used to consider fake literature. They didn't see any incompatibility between the Symbolism and Parnassian. Thus, the Symbolism embodies the Parnassian and develops parallel with the Decadents using yet tonalities and expressive means specific to Eminescu.

Symbolism introduced in Romanian literature a new technique and a new lyric style, the landscape of Romanian poetry enriches and varies: rural space is avoided and is evoked the city with the park and with its monumental buildings, the sea, the exotic landscapes—existence environments less exploited. Also, the Symbolists delicately look for new soul spaces, original interior moods, from a new angle. Thus, the thematic area enriches considerably further:

nature with its seasons are a space of correspondences; love without hope, sweetheart's house became a sanctuary for the lyrical ego where the illness's roughness attenuates, the garden as a space of shelter and meditation, the illness, the great journey, the condition of blamed poet, condemned to live in the middle of aristocracy to write and die understood. Consequently, "to the area's vulgarity is given the cold shoulder through."[12]

According to the mentioned themes, to the wonderful or distressing sights prevalence, we can distinguish two tendencies of development inside Romanian Symbolism. Into the category of fascinating we meet lyrical creations that confess the carving for picturesque, the ardour for travelling on seas or land, to exotic lands, to an objective, subtle existence of some poets, inclined sometimes towards thoughtlessness. The distressing supposes sadness, bitterness, revolt or submission in the creation of some dreaming, melancholy poets, interiorized, deeply marked by everyday life, monotony, aversion from everyday life stereotypy (Şt. Petică, I. C. Săvescu, I. Minulescu), by social injustice consciousness (Tr. Demetrescu, M. Săulescu, Emil Isac, G. Bacovia). Poet's condition and his poem include antifilistin enthusiasm (Al. Macedonski, Emil Isac, G. Bacovia) or a humanitarian sentimentalism (I. C. Săvescu, Tr. Demetrescu, Şt. Petică, I. Minulescu, M. Cruceanu.)

In its diversity, the theme of Symbolist poem expresses a non-conforming attitude, of inappropriateness with a mercantile, philistine world. Symbolist poets reveal the *spleen*, the solitude mood, the neurosis sustained by an entire prop characteristic to Symbolism, which dims the immediate support of these moods arose from world's non-acceptance to society directly reflected in verses.

The solitude motif descends from Romanticism and it is enriched with the silence's melancholy, with undecided and doubtful gestures, with oppressive sadness especially in Dimitrie Anghel's poetry in which we can see his refuge in the garden.

Love, as a literary theme, is not marked by the symbolists in the context of nature, although the poets will find correspondences in communicating their feelings through their predilection for fragrances and music. It is underlined the intimate side of love poetry

by the presence of the objects in Al. Macedonski's creation and then developed by D. Anghel, N. Davidescu, Ion Pillat, Ion Minulescu. Here we find the room, the paintings, the chest of drawers, the library, the inner place where lives, usually his sweetheart.

The theme of nature is accentuated by the predilection for floral. A well known floral universe we can see in D. Anghel's volume: "In the Garden" ("În grădină"), where flowers remind us of the dead, of the love constancy, and the garden is an ideal sanctuary of man's frustrated consciousness. Mihai Moșandrei named him "our spirituality flowers gardener,"[13] Dimitrie Anghel is placed among the *native* symbolism by Lucia Bote Marino.[14]

Dimitrie Anghel distinguishes in the context of Romanian Symbolism through his special approach to flower's universe. He considers the chosen flowers' garden as a space of withdrawal in the ideal, and he frequently identifies himself with the floral element which he transforms into an avatar—interpreted exclusively as a metamorphosis, devoid of any negative connotation. D. Anghel's imaginary is symbolically represented in a conventional manner, similarly, through reality's transfiguration in the wake of poet's terror faced to the coercive real, the actual commonplace.

The escape is achieved by means of flowers' fragrance using the poet's emotional memory (as M. Proust does) which explain his predilection for the world of flowers in a page of prose in "The Story of the Troubled"—"Povestea celor necăjiți:"[15]

> I have chosen the world of flowers because in their world I have spent my childhood. I recollected the wonderful garden from where I lived, the sweet sound of the spring, the sound of the trees, the petals wasted by the blowing wind. I remembered the sympathy that I had for some flowers and the unjustified antipathy for others. The fragrances were their secret thoughts, their unique way of speaking and I could have guessed in the darkness, at the night, when their perfume is more intense, and what specific flower sent it to me and later all these memories revived and tormented me, and I searched the resemblance of their gloom in the wonderful composition of the petals of a rose, or a lily, I tried to put it in stanzas.[16]

The poet is so close to nature that he frequently identifies himself with its elements—usually with the aristocratic spirit of the white lily and, at a certain point, with the oak through an allegory—"The Oak and the Mistletoe" ("Stejarul şi vâscul"), dedicated to a critic. The oak is the symbol of steadfastness and persistence over time, of power, of masculinity, of immortality and it was dedicated to Hera in ancient times; the Dryads were oak nymphs. The oak's heavy wood was compared to incorruptibility. Associated with the potential to live long, it symbolizes power and eternal life.

However, the floral avatar motif is significant in a text whose title is intriguing and seems to anticipate it: "Metamorphosis" ("Metamorfoză"), a poetry from the volume named "Fantasies" ("Fantazii," 1909) and also in the poetry named "In the Garden" ("În grădină") from the homonymous volume (1905). Instead, in the "Death of Narcissus" ("Moartea lui Narcis") the poet finds his human avatar.

I, now, submit "Metamorphosis" ("Metamorfoză") for analysis.[17] In this text, the imaginary transposition is achieved by an impersonal verb used to imply the detachment desire "Şi *se făcea* că fără voie trăiam acum o viaţă nouă."

A modal phrase—"fără voie" is added to this in order to emphasize the irresistible force of floral narcosis, followed by apocope—"făr' de veste."

The dream motif involves the escape from the real space, the refuge in a permitted, deliberate way by placing, in the first verse, the verb in mai-mult-ca-perfect "lăsasem să m–adoarmă crinii . . ."—assuming some causative idea for what is to come through the intervention of the olfactory: "seară dulce" in which the lily's fragrance emphasizes its narcotic power.

The parallel, imaginary universe fancied by the poet in which everything is possible is represented by a nominal group "o viaţă nouă." We easily identify here the floral avatar by the chosen flower—that is superior and aristocratic. It is a symbol of purity, perfection, mercy and majesty in most cultures; the lily, once symbolized light and male principle, it is the flower of glory and death also. The flower description focuses on an interesting visual contrasting image: the pure, superlative white—emphasised at a

morphemic level by tmesis: "atât de alb eram subt lună"—"abia scriam o umbră," promoting, at the same time, the desire to be eternal according to the *scripta manent* dictum and the inability to detach from the previous life's calling—writing.

The dream begins in the first verse with the expression of desire ("voind") and it is enhanced by repeating a verb in gerund in the beginning of the second stanza: "Visând trăiam cu ei acuma"— suggesting the anchoring in the present moment and the inclusion in the vegetable kingdom through the comparison: "şi eu un crin ca dânşii." We identify the lily's preciousness in the final verse of the first quatrain which contains both an epithet and a metaphor: "Îmi întindeam voios potirul să prind o lacrimă de rouă."

In the dark, in a calm atmosphere, under the guardianship star of the night and reverie ("subt lună"), playfulness comes through a personified epithet: "m–alinta şăgalnic vântul," and also the reconciliation with itself: "tihnă se făcuse–n mine şi caldă inima şi bună."

The metamorphoses idea is reiterated—"sub altă formă, să–mpodobesc şi eu pământul"—as an aesthetification, utility, attractiveness way, forgetting the overwhelming feeling of rejection, of loneliness, of futility.

The temporal coordination, by reference to context, is achieved by a relative adverb, "when," introducing the following indication: "o mână pală . . . / S–a–ntins vrăjmaşă să mă frângă"[18]. Instinctively, such an inferior human being: "the pale hand" ("mână pală")—in visual contrast with its shadow ("umbra sa")—descends above the lily (representing a part of the whole—"grămadă") anticipating the thanatic: "Ca subt imboldul unei forţe necunoscute şi fatale,/ S–a–ntins vrăjmaşă să mă frângă." The mild extinction ("Mureám tihnit de–a doua oară în liniştea odăii tale") is achieved in a favourable and comfortable environment ("cu faţa calmă între perne") in which the poet had taken refuge—his lover's chamber. As in dream and as in reality, the soul's extinction involves the detachment of flesh/body and its subsequent materialization in "another perfect and eternal form"—"altă formă desăvârşită şi eternă" preserving the notable essence at a lexical–semantic level by synecdoche.

The superior man is searching for the perfect form to identify to until merger and which form to reflect his essence of his aspiring to the transcendent—"Eu ca o pulbere de aur m–am ridicat uşor subt lună." The identification is often made by explicit comparisons and metaphors. The reiteration of the process, of the agony is achieved through the repetition of the indicative verb—"muream" ("I was dying")—that gives a durative note reflecting the manner of experiencing, of feeling the agony. We can easily observe the abundance of the indicative verbs in the first person singular in each verse of the first two stanzas—they constitute the poetic marks.

The semantic context of the stylistic figures, especially of the comparisons and personifications, includes specific elements of Dimitrie Anghel's Symbolism: nature ("m–alinta şăgalnic *vântul*," "alb ca o *zăpadă*"), the vegetal element ("Eram şi eu un *crin* ca dânșii"), the human element ("făcându–ţi *braţele* cunună"), the abstract element ("*Muream* tihnit," "*mişcându–şi* umbra . . . /Ca subt imboldul unei forţe*"), the intertwining of the human and the vegetal elements until identification ("*Eu* ca *o pulbere de aur.*")

The common element of the comparisons that have vegetal elements imply the idea of *purity* by colour (the adjective *alb*—*white*, the noun *zăpadă*—*snow*—which emphasize by contrast the night's chromatic) to which the human being embodied in lily is associated to. In comparisons the noun is predominant and it is also part of another stylistic figure, which is a metaphor: "Eu |crinul| ca *o pulbere de aur*."

There are obvious, at the prosody level, the equal measure of the syllables—18 syllables, the cross rhyme and the iambic rhythm. The phonological level has the apocope—"făr' de veste" and the paronomasia—"fatale—tale," alongside the usual flow that gives the poetry an elegiac tone.

In an extensive analysis of Dimitrie Anghel's style, G. Călinescu wrote down:

> Essentially a Symbolist, Dimitrie Anghel, is more authentic than others, although the contrasts and blending that constitute a personality. . . . Because of the fact that Anghel

named one of his books *Fantasies*, it remained as some kind of critic cliché that the poet is a fantasist. Anghel's fantasy is the allegoric fabulous, but some imagism arrived from it.[19]

Thus, the dream represents the immersion in the continuous metamorphoses space, a souls' transmigration space, a metempsychosis space, but, especially a space of human being retrieval of originary self. The returning to real space through the ritual extinction of the lily requires openness to new metamorphoses but it also has the significance of trauma because of the ideality and originating painful rupture. The anchoring in the past, in the archetypal times, is performed by Dimitrie Anghel using the symbols with mythological reference: Vestals, Hera, Oedipus, Narcissus, Midas etc.

Through connections (*correspondances*) the author manages to fully express the relation between the poetic—representing the micro and the world—as a macrocosmic universe which is interpreted by symbols at the receptiveness level.

In this manner, Dimitrie Anghel contributed to the development of the Romanian language and he also challenged the future poets to extract the full meaning of the words and also enrich the imagery with extraordinary symbols and expressions.

NOTES
[1] I. Pillat, *Opere*, (Bucureşti: Editura DU Style, 2003), 234.
[2] Pillat, *Opere*, 236.
[3] Pillat, *Opere*, 237.
[4] Pillat, *Opere*, 237.
[5] Pillat, *Opere*, 237.
[6] Pillat, *Opere*, 238.
[7] Pillat, *Opere*, 238.
[8] Pillat, *Opere*, 240.
[9] Pillat, *Opere*, 250.
[10] Pillat, *Opere*, 250.
[11] Lucia Bote Marino, *Simbolismul românesc*, (Bucureşti: Editura pentru Literatură, 1966), 107.
[12] Bote Marino, Simbolismul, 226.

[13] M. Moşandrei, *Dimitrie Anghel, poet al florilor*, (Bucureşti: Universul literar, Anul XLVII, Nr. 44, 17 Decembrie 1938), 8.

[14] Bote Marino, *Simbolismul*, 329.

[15] Iulian Boldea, *De la modernism la postmodernism*, (Târgu–Mureş: Editura Universităţii „Petru Maior", 2011), 19.

[16] D. Anghel, *Versuri şi proză*, (Bucureşti: Editura Albatros, 1989), 97.

[17] Anghel, *Versuri*, 51.

[18] Anghel, *Versuri*, 52.

[19] G. Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române*, (Bucureşti: Editura Semne, 2003), 608–610.

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Is There Anything Left to be Told About John? The Future of Johannine Character Studies and the Literary Concept of *Bildung*

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ABSTRACT: In this paper, the author suggests that Johannine scholarship can be enriched in the future with the contribution of scholars from different parts of the world, sometimes even from areas where Johannine scholarship does not have a long tradition. He also briefly advances a new approach to character studies in the Fourth Gospel, emphasizing the possibility of engaging the modern literary genre of Bildung/Bildungsroman in the study of the gospel narratives, succinctly arguing for the legitimacy of his approach.
KEY WORDS: Fourth Gospel, characters, Bildung, Bildungsroman, novel.

During my Seminary years, I was encouraged by my professors to pursue an academic career in Johannine studies. The main reason was the fact that one could hardly find a New Testament scholar primarily focused on the Johannine track in the (Evangelical) Romanian theological context. I began to read John's Gospel with a higher level of interest than before. When the time to write my BA thesis came, I tried to find a subject that could be both scholarly and original. I decided to write on "The Theology of Exodus in the Fourth Gospel." I thought that my findings on Exodus in John were notable breakthroughs in Johannine scholarship. Little did I know at the beginning of my research that a considerable amount of material had been produced on the matter (not just for John's Gospel,[1] but

for all the other canonical gospels[2] and that the Exodus/new Exodus theme was followed by many in different books of the Hebrew Bible[3] and in the New Testament.)[4]

Virtually the same situation occurred while writing my MTh dissertation, again in Johannine studies. I considered, probably inspired by one of Richard Bauckham's works,[5] that a research in the politics of John's Gospel[6] would be at least scholarly engaging if not somehow original. While completing my dissertation with the title "Towards a Political Theology of John's Gospel" I understood that I was mistaken again.[7]

One of my main issues was that in Romania, in a sense, all theology, besides Eastern–Orthodox theology (with its most influential theologian, the late Father Professor Dumitru Stăniloae, an acclaimed scholar in church dogmatics)[8] can be considered in its adolescence, struggling to recover after a half of century of communism. Another issue is the fact that Eastern–Orthodox theologians, who represent the majority, are not very fond of biblical studies.[9] So, Romanian theology really does not have a tradition in biblical research (besides occasional theologians that emerge from the Protestant tradition, such as Reverend Professor Hans Klein[10] and sometimes from the Orthodox), though Evangelical theologians are struggling to raise an interest in this matter for the past three decades.[11] But the main problem that any biblical student, researcher or scholar is facing in Romania is the lack of resources. Besides the rather small libraries held by the Seminaries of different Evangelical denominations (displaying on average 20000 volumes each), the library of a center for contemporary Christian education and culture (displaying around 38000 volumes) and the library of a private Evangelical Christian university (displaying over 60000 volumes), there is hardly any accomplished library for those who seek to do research in biblical studies. One must rely on resources that can be found abroad.

Hoping to avoid past experiences regarding writing a final thesis or dissertation, during the research for my doctoral degree (at the Baptist Theological Faculty, University of Bucharest), I managed to gather a considerable amount of resources in order to be able to produce a proper doctoral thesis. My periods of research in

Cambridge (2012) and Oxford (2013–2014, as an academic visitor) proved to be very fruitful. But during all this time, I could not get myself free of a thought which a very good friend of mine and mentor shared once with me. When he understood that I was set on following the Johannine track he kindly asked me: "Is there anything left to be told about John?" (implying that there is already vast scholarship on John's Gospel). Ironically enough, he is an Old Testament scholar. I thought that I would fail again to produce something original from John. But while reading the Fourth Gospel, I suddenly noticed some details that could bring something forth, something I considered to be worth mentioning.

I realized that besides Jesus, who is undoubtedly the main character of the Fourth Gospel, as Culpepper correctly states,[12] and, I must add, of any gospel, there are two very important figures that emerge through the gospel's narrative: Peter and the Beloved Disciple. I also noticed that the way in which the fourth evangelist ends his account is meant to bring for the last time the above mentioned characters into the spotlight. Bultmann skillfully emphasizes the role of the two disciples in chapter 21, arguing for a "motif of Peter and the beloved disciple."[13] T. Cottam also believes that the ending of the gospel tries to balance the narrative in which Peter denies Jesus, but also tries to dismiss a rumor regarding the Beloved Disciple.[14] Blomberg carries the observations regarding the two even further. He believes that chapter 21 was added after Peter's death or possibly after the death of the Beloved Disciple.[15] This is a very significant conclusion because it shows the prominent roles of the two disciples for the Christian community that were familiar with the gospel's account and also the preeminent roles of the two for the primitive Christian community in Jerusalem. Blomberg is not the only one to observe that the last chapter of the Fourth Gospel is important because of Peter and the Beloved Disciple. D. A. Carson also states:

> True, John 20:30–31 is the climax of the book, the 'conclusion' in that sense. But as in a 'whodunit' where all the pieces have finally come together in a magnificent act of disclosure, there remains certain authorial discretion: the book may

end abruptly with the act of disclosure, the solution to the mystery, or it may wind down through a postscript that tells what happens to the characters, especially if what happens to them sheds a certain light backward onto the principal plot of the work.[16]

Based on these observations, I understood that at least the ending of the Fourth Gospel is about the outcome of the discipleship process of Peter and the Beloved Disciple. Also, the circular shape of the gospel, with Simon Peter's calling to follow Jesus at the beginning and a similar calling at the end reassured me that the observation was not misleading.[17] But these considerations seemed not to be sufficient to develop a thesis focused on character studies in the Fourth Gospel, especially in the context in which this topic has been of major interest in Johannine studies for the past 30 years,[18] starting with Culpepper's work (*Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*) and even before that.[19] Some scholars were interested in characters based on gender considerations;[20] others were concerned with the anonymous characters,[21] characters defined by ambiguity,[22] minor characters[23] or non Jewish characters present in the narratives of the Fourth Gospel.[24] In the same time some manifested interest for individual characters (the mother of Jesus,[25] Nicodemus,[26] the woman at the well,[27] Moses,[28] Judas,[29] the Jews,[30] Martha and Mary,[31] Lazarus,[32] Mary Magdalene,[33] Thomas,[34] Jesus[35] – and Logos[36] – and God[37]), and others showed interest for characters in tandem[38] or for the relationship between certain characters.[39] There are some works concerned with Peter's portrayal[40] and the portrayal of the Beloved Disciple[41] and even the portrayal of the two together.[42]

Like others, I became interested in the portrayals of Peter and the Beloved Disciple in the Fourth Gospel. But the same issue occurred. Is there anything left to be told about these characters in John? Then "the coin dropped." I recalled studying years ago about a modern literary concept that seemed to gather the details about the two disciples which I noticed in the Fourth Gospel. The concept I will be referring to is *Bildung* or *Bildungsroman*. The term is of German provenance and basically means "formation novel", referring to the development of the hero or the main character of the novel.[43]

Based on the way in which the image of a hero can be built, the novels can be classified as follows: a journey novel, a testing novel, a biographic or autobiographic novel and a *Bildungsroman*.[44] Starting from the meaning of *Bildung*, R. P. Shaffner advances the idea of an 'apprenticeship' type of novel.[45]

     Manfred Engel emphasizes a certain ambiguity of the term *Bildungsroman*, though it belongs to the tried and tested tools of literary criticism, there seems to be little consensus on its exact meaning. There are probably two reasons for this state of matters: the anachronistic origin of the term and its successful globalization.[46] Most researches in the field agree that this genre appeared in German literature towards the end of the XVIIIth century with Christoph Martin Wieland's *Deschichte des Aghaton* in 1766–1767, Karl Philip Moritz's *Anton Reiser* in 1785–1790, as the first example of negative *Bildungsroman*, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* in 1795–1796, as the seminal model of the genre.[47] The term which adequately describes this type of novel would be created by Karl Morgenstern in 1810, using it for the first time in one of his lectures at the University of Tartu.[48] Unfortunately his essays and lectures on the genre were little read and so his contribution was soon forgotten. Based on R. P. Shaffner's research it seems that the concept of *Bildungsroman* was already defined by Friedrich von Blankenburg towards the end of the XVIIIth century (in 1774) in his *Versuch über den Roman*.[49] The term *Bildungsroman* was re-invented after a century from the above mentioned novels by the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey at the University of Berlin, who will use the term in *Das Leben Schleiermachers* in 1870. Yet the term didn't receive a broader reception until 1905 with the collection of essays *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*.[50]

     According to Dithley, in a *Bildungsroman* the author follows the progress of a young man[51] in his struggle to understand himself, find his identity and establish his role and responsibility in society. Based on this view, a *Bildungsroman* has a universality which an autobiography doesn't have. The former follows a representative young man, who eventually becomes a type, and his experiences become symbols.[52]

But what is a *Bildungsroman* after all? The term received the following definition in the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*: "a kind of novel that follows the development of the hero from childhood or adolescence to adulthood, through a trouble quest for identity."[53] Another definition is given by *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*: "this is a term more or less synonymous with *Erziehungsroman*—literally an upbringing or education novel. . . . Widely used by German critiques, it refers to a novel which is an account of the youthful development of a hero or heroine (usually the former.) It describes the process by which maturity is achieved by through the various ups and downs of life."[54]

It seemed that Peter and the Beloved Disciple fit in the generous limits of the *Bildung/Bildungsroman* genre. But is it safe to mingle with a modern literary concept, when in fact we are dealing with the ancient text of the Fourth Gospel and its characters? The main inconvenience is probably in the largely spread understanding among scholars that ancient literary characters are quite different from the modern ones. This objection is due to the noticeable difference in which a character is understood in the Mediterranean ancient literature and the European modern literature. Ancient characters are viewed merely as types, while modern characters are expected to show noticeable psychological development.[55] But one should be aware, as S. P. Roth points out, that the difference between ancient and modern characterization is one of kind, and not one of quality.[56] Despite these observations, some scholars seemed to identify the *Bildung/Bildungsroman* genre in different Bible narratives.

Professor J. Barton, considering J. Miles' proposal that the Old Testament should be regarded as a novel with a single plot and with a progressive portrayal of its main character, God,[57] suggested that the entire Old Testament could be viewed as a *Bildungsroman*.[58] This kind of observation encourages the Bible reader to identify without much difficulty numerous narratives which reflect the *Bildung/Bildungsroman* genre. For example in the Pentateuch: the life of Joseph,[59] but also the life of Jacob, the life of Moses, the life of Joshua; or outside the Pentateuch: Samson, Samuel, and David,[60] even Esther[61] or Job,[62] and probably Daniel too.[63] All these stories

with their main protagonists reveal more or less specific elements of a *Bildungsroman*.

Interestingly, R. Romøren argues that the intrinsic model of *Bildungsroman* has in fact a biblical origin:

> All histories become narratives in one way or another, and in this case the narrative conforms to the pattern of *Bildungsroman*, with its narrative structure Home-Departure-Adventure and Trials-Homecoming. The important part here is the idea of the return home, which I regard as a pre-modern and religious concept of story, with roots going back to the Bible (The Prodigal Son).[64]

Again, the element emphasized by Romøren, "the return home", can be easily found in the last episode of the Fourth Gospel, especially in Peter's case. For Simon Peter this is not just the moment of returning home, but the moment when he reaches his maturity after important trials and hardship. A. J. Köstenberger reaches similar conclusions in a discussion regarding the mission of Jesus' disciples. He states that the development of Peter and the Beloved Disciple is followed through the gospel narratives culminating with the scene from 21:15–23. Moreover, the relationship between the two disciples provides a coherent perspective for the entire gospel.[65]

Being aware of the popularity and the realism which are characterizing the *Bildung* genre and also acknowledging the fact that "the term *Bildungsroman* has enormous range and applicability,"[66] I decided to write a doctoral thesis with the title: "An Ancient *Bildung* Based on Pentateuch Narratives. The Portrait of Peter and of the Beloved Disciple in the Fourth Gospel." Though a *Bildungsroman* is interested in just one character, I realized that, in a sense, Peter and the Beloved Disciple are inseparable and they are brought forth together in major moments of the plot (see John 13, probably 18, 20, 21).[67]

Everything seemed safe enough in terms of research until I encountered some of R. R. Beck's observations in the context of a rather brief interaction he had with the *Bildungsroman* genre. Referring to the way in which a modern reader approaches an

ancient text, Beck believes that the reader needs a tool of control to be assisted by while aiming to understand the ancient text, because he naturally approaches the text using a genre more familiar to him. This tool of control is in fact the ancient genre which characterizes the text itself. He also specifies that the first century genres act as second–order controls, because we primarily tend to read the text in our own terms, appealing to the genres which are culturally and temporarily closer to us. If used properly, the second–order controls might rule out some current options, offering as an example the *Bildungsroman*, because this genre is lacking in early precedents, adding that this is not the case of biography. At the same time, ancient genres might suggest modern analogues.[68]

Though Beck's observations prove to be pertinent, they could be somehow refined. It is true that historically, the *Bildungsroman* lacks early precedents, but it might have considerable aesthetic and conceptual precedents as already briefly shown above. An ancient text, like Mark's Gospel to which Beck was referring to, or like John's Gospel, can display characteristics specific to the *Bildungsroman* genre, despite the ancient author's independence in relation to the history of the modern genre itself. So to speak, Beck's conclusion is not definitive, because even the romantic novelists who created *Bildungsromane* have done this before the time when a proper terminology to describe the phenomena would appear.[69]

At the same time, there is the other side of the discussion. B. Hochman, for example, is aware of the differences between ancient and modern literature in different ways (to indicate just one, the way in which the person is understood), but at the end, as modern readers, he argues that "we have no alternative but to construct our images of character in terms of our knowledge and experience."[70] M. Stibbe is even more specific, saying that one can use "the techniques associated with characterization in the modern novel", while approaching the characters of the Fourth Gospel.[71]

I would like to advance, in sense, a slightly new approach in Johannine character studies. Probably it could be beneficial to give the modern reader more credit and more independence while approaching the ancient text of gospel, especially in the context of the discussion about *Bildung* and the characters of the Fourth Gospel.

Using "second–order controls" – to make use of Beck's phrase – is scholarly sane, but what if we try to approach the text in a more appealing fashion to the modern reader? Instead of dismissing the *Bildungrsroman* because of its presupposed lack of precedents, one could benefit from the aesthetics of a very common genre even for the Bible narratives.

Being aware of the fact that my intervention merely scratches the surface of the discussion advertised in the title of my paper, I would like to add at the end that besides the lack of resource in some parts of the world and the scholarly abundance in other parts, it seems that Johannine scholarship is still flourishing and continually gathering new topics in its swirl. So there is still plenty left to be told about John.

NOTES

[1] For example, J. J. Enz, "The Book of Exodus as a Literary Type for the Gospel of John," *Journal for Biblical Literature* 76 (1957): 208–215; R. H. Smith, "Exodus Typology in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal for Biblical Literature* 81 (1962): 329–42; Duncan J. Derrett, "Why and How Jesus Walked on the Sea?," *Novum Testamentum* 23.4 (1981): 330–48; John Dominic Crossan, "It Is Written: A Structuralist Analysis of John 6," *Semeia* 26 (1983): 3–21; John Ashton, "The Identity and Function of the Ioudaioi in the Fourth Gospel," *Novum Testamentum* 27 (1985): 40–75; Stephen J. Casselli, "Jesus as Escathological Torah," *Theological Studies* 18.1 (1997): 15–41; Adam C. English, "Feeding Imagery in the Gospel of John: Uniting the Physical and the Spiritual," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 28.3 (Fall 2001): 203–14; Stan Harstine, *Moses as a Character in the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Ancient Reading Techniques* (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 229; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Andrew C. Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John: An Intertextual Study on the New Exodus Pattern in the Theology of John* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Susan Hylen, *Allusion and Meaning in John 6* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005).

[2] For example, Mánek Jindrich, "New Exodus [of Jesus] in the Book of Luke," *Novum Testamentum* 2.1 (1957): 8–23; James T. Dennison, Jr., "The Exodus: Historical Narrative, Prophetic Hope, Gospel Fulfillment", *Presbyterion* 8.2 (1982): 1–12; Sharon H. Ringe, "Luke 9:28–36: The Begining of an Exodus," *Semeia* 28 (1983): 83–99.

[3] For example, David Daube, *The Exodus Pattern in the Bible* (All Souls Studies 2; London: Faber & Faber, 1963); Susan Gillingham, "The Exodus Tradition and Israelite Psalmody," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 52.1 (1999):

19–46; Melody, D. Knowels, "Pilgrimage Imagery in the Returns in Ezra," *Journal for Biblical Literature* 123.1 (2004): 57–74; Anthony R. Ceresko, "The Rhetorical Strategy of the Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 53:13–53:12): Poetry and the Exodus-New Exodus," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 56 (1994): 42–55.

[4] For example, Otto A. Piper, "Unchanging Promises: Exodus in the New Testament," *Interpretation* 11.1 (1957): 3–22; Fred L. Fisher, "The New and Greater Exodus: The Exodus Pattern in the New Testament," SWJT 20 (1977): 69–79; R. E. Nixon, *The Exodus in the New Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1963); J. Richard Clifford, S.J., "The Exodus in the Christian Bible: The Case for 'Figural' Reading," *Theological Studies* 63.2 (2002): 345–61.

[5] Richard Bauckham, *The Bible in Politics* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989).

[6] See Warren Carter, *John and Empire* (New York, London: T&T Clark, 2008); Travis D. Trost, *Who Should be King in Israel? A Study on Roman Imperial Politics, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010); Beth M. Stovell, *Mapping Metaphorical Discourse in the Fourth Gospel. John's Eternal King* (Linguistic Biblical Studies 5; Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[7] A important study, in this respect, was produced by David Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1988).

[8] See Dumitru Stăniloae, *Theology and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980); IDEM, *The Experience of God. Orthodox Dogmatic Theology. Vol. 1. Revelation and Knowledge of the Triune God*, trans. ed. Ioan Ionita & Robert Barringer (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1994); IDEM, *The Experience of God. Orthodox Dogmatic Theology. Vol. 2.The World: Creation and Deification*, trans. ed. Ioan Ionita & Robert Barringer (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2000);); IDEM, *The Experience of God. Orthodox Dogmatic Theology. Vol. 3.The Person of Jesus Christ as God and Savior*, trans. ed. Ioan Ionita & Robert Barringer (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2011); IDEM, *The Experience of God. Orthodox Dogmatic Theology. Vol. 4.The Church: Communion in the Holy Spirit*, trans. ed. Ioan Ionita & Robert Barringer (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2012); IDEM, *The Experience of God. Orthodox Dogmatic Theology. Vol. 5.The Sanctifying Mysteries*, trans. ed. Ioan Ionita & Robert Barringer (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2012); IDEM, *The Experience of God. Orthodox Dogmatic Theology. Vol. 6.The Fulfillment of Creation*, trans. ed. Ioan Ionita & Robert Barringer (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2013); IDEM, *The Holy Trinity: In the Beginning There Was Love* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2013).

[9] As Trine Stauning Willert asserts, referring to Greek Orthodox theology, "the preference given to patristic studies has resulted in a poor contemporary tradition of biblical studies." *New Voices in Greek Orthodox Thought. Untying the bond between Nation and Religion* (Ashgate New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies Series; Surrey, UK/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014),

67.

¹⁰ See Hans Klein, *Leben neu entdecken. Entwurf einer Biblischen Theologie* (Stuttgart: 1991); IDEM, *Bewährung im Glauben: Studien zum Sondergut des Evangelisten Matthäus* (Biblisch–Theologische Studien, 26; NeukirchenVluyn: Neukirchener, 1996); IDEM, *Lukasstudien* (Forschugen zu Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, 209; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).

¹¹ Most of the Romanian Evangelical scholars who managed to pursue a doctoral degree abroad were mainly interested in biblical studies: Alexandru Neagoe, *The Trial of the Gospel: An Apologetic Reading of Luke's Trial Narratives* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Radu Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews: An Investigation of Its Influence with Special Consideration to the use of Hab 2:3–4in Heb 10:37–38* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); Sorin Sabou, *Between Horror and Hope: Paul's Metaphysical Language of Death in Romans 6:1–11* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Bletchley: Paternoster, 2005); Octavian D. Baban, *On the Road Encounters in Luke-Acts: Hellenistic Mimesis and Luke's Theology of the Way* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Miltin Keynes: Paternoster, 2006); Corneliu Constantineanu, *The Social Significance of Reconciliation in Paul's Theology: Narrative Readings in Romans* (Library of New Testament Studies; London: T&T Clark, 2010); John Tipei, "The Laying on of the Hands in the New Testament" (PhD Dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2000); Dorin Axente, "Light and Darkness in the Fourth Gospel: A Missiological Reading of the Johannine Dualism" (PhD Dissertation, London School of Theology/Brunel University, 2005); Silviu Tatu, "The Qatal// Yiqtol (Yiqtol//Qatal) Verbal Sequence in Couplets in the Hebrew Psalter with Special Reference to Ugaritic Poetry: a Case Study in Systemic Functional Grammar" (PhD Dissertation, Oxford Center for Mission Studies and University of Wales, 2006); Marcel Valentin Măcelaru, "From Divine Speech to National/ Ethnic Self-Definition in the Hebrew Bible: Representation(s) of Identity and the Motif of Divine-Human Distancing in Israel's Story" (DPhil Dissertation, University of Oxford, 2008). Others have shown interest in Stăniloae's work: Emil Bartos, *Deification in Eastern Orthodox Theology: An Evaluation and Critique of the Theology of Dumitru Stăniloae* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1999); Danut Manastireanu, *A Perichoretic Model of the Church: The Trinitarian Ecclesiology of Dumitru Staniloae* (Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2012).

¹² R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 106.

¹³ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 704.

¹⁴ Thomas Cottam, *The Fourth Gospel Rearranged* (London: Epworth Press, 1952), 76–77.

¹⁵ Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter–Varsity Press, 2001), 39, 44.

[16] D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England, Inter–Varsity Press; Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 666.

[17] Peter J. Williams in "Not the Prologue of John," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33 (2011): 375–86, shows that in the Fourth Gospel there are multiple beginnings and multiple endings.

[18] For example Raymond F. Collins, *These Things Have Been Written: Studies on the Fourth Gospel* (Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs, 2; Louvain: Peeters Press, 1990): 1–45; Peter Dschulnigg, *Jesus Begegnen: Personen und ihre Bedeutung im Johannesevangelium* (Münster: Lit, 2002); Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus. Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Milton Keynes; Colorado Springs; Hyderabad: Paternoster, 2009); Nicolas Farelly, *The Disciples in the Fourth Gospel: A Narrative Analysis of their Faith and Understanding* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010); Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie & Ruben Zimmermann, *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

[19] For example E. Kraft, "Die Personen des Johannesevangeliums," *EvT* 16 (1956): 18–32.

[20] Robert G. Maccini, *Her Testimony is True: Women Witnesses according to John* (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 125; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Jo-Ann A. Brant, "Husband Hunting: Characterization and Narrative Art in the Gospel of John," *Biblical Interpretation* 4 (1996): 205–23; Adeline Fehribach, *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical–Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998); Ingrid R. Kitzberger, ed., *Transformative Encounters: Jesus and Women Re-viewed* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 77–111; Colleen M. Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization* (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 167; Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999); Margaret M. Beirne, *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel: A genuine Discipleship of Equals* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003).

[21] David R. Beck, *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (Biblical Interpretation Series 27; Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill, 1997).

[22] Susan E. Hylen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

[23] For example, Colleen M. Conway, "Speaking through Ambiguity: Minor Characters in the Fourth Gospel," *Biblical Interpretation* 10 (2002): 324–41.

[24] Elizabeth Danna, "Which Side of the Line? A Study of the Characterization of non-Jewish Characters in the Gospel of John" (PhD Dissertation, University of Durham, 1997).

[25] Judith M. Lieu, "The Mother of the Son in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal for Biblical Literature* 117 (1998): 61–77.

[26] M. Bassler, "Mixed Signals: Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal for*

Biblical Literature 108 (1989): 635–46.

[27] Frances Taylor Gench, *Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 109–35.

[28] Harstine, *Moses as a Character in the Fourth Gospel*.

[29] Tom Thatcher, "Jesus, Judas and Peter: Character by Contrast in the Fourth Gospel," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153 (1996): 435–48; Michael W. Martin, *Judas and the Rhetoric of Comparison in the Fourth Gospel* (New Testament Monographs 25; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010).

[30] Francis J. Moloney, "'The Jews' in the Fourth Gospel: Another Perspective," *Pac* 15 (2002):16–36.

[31] Francis J. Moloney, "The Faith of Mary and Martha: A Narrative Approach to John 11.17–40," *Biblica* 75 (1994): 471–93.

[32] Wilhem Wuellner, "Putting Life Back into the Lazarus Story and Its Reading: The Narrative Rhetoric of John 11 as the Narration of Faith," *Semeia* 53 (1991): 114–32.

[33] Susanne Ruschmann, *Maria von Magdala im Johannesevangelium: Jüngerin–Zeugin–Lebensbotin* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2002); Reinhard Nordsieck, *Maria Magdalena, Die Frau An Jesu Seite* (Berlin: Lit, 2014).

[34] Dennis Sylva, *Thomas – Love as Strong as Death: Faith and Commitment in the Fourth Gospel* (London: T&T Clark Bloomsbury, 2013).

[35] Pierre Létourneau, "La caractérisation de Jésu dans l'Évangile de Jean: Stratégie narrative et acte de lecture " in *Et vous, qui dites–vous que je suis? La question des personnages dans les récits bibliques*, ed. Pierre Létourneau, Michel Talbot (Sciences Bibliques 16; Montréal, QC: Médiaspaul, 2006): 143–72.

[36] Jason Sturdevant, *The Character of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel: The Adaptability of the Logos* (PhD Dissertation; Princeton Theological Seminary, 2013). On 'Logos' see Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, "Logosul şi înţelepciunea," in *Studii de istorie a filosofiei universale,* XIII, edited by Alexandru Boboc, N. I. Mariş (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române, 2005), 295–323.

[37] Marianne Meye Thompson, "'God's Voise You Have Never Heard, God's Form You Have Never Seen:' The Characterization of God in the Gospel of John," *Semeia* 63 (1993): 177–204.

[38] Christopher M. Skinner, *John and Thomas – Gospels in Conflict? Johannine Characterization and the Thomas Question* (Princeton Theological Monograph Series 115; Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009).

[39] Judith Hartenstein, *Charakterisierung im Dialog: Maria Magdalena, Petrus, Thomas und die Mutter Jesu im Johannesevangelium* (Göttingen/Fribourg: Vandenvoeck & Ruprecht/Academic Press Fribourg, 2007).

[40] Bradford B. Blaine, Jr., *Peter in the Gospel of John: The Making of an Authentic Disciple* (Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica 27; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007); Donald Chung–Yiu Leung, "Peter in the Fourth Gospel: Character Development and Reader Emphaty" (PhD Dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2001); Tanja Schultheiss, *Das Petrusbild im*

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[41] Thorlwald Lorenzen, *Der Lieblingsjünger im Johannesevangelium: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie* (Stuttgart Bibelstudien 55; Stuttgart: KBW Verlang, 1971); Joseph A. Grassi, *The Secret Identity of the Beloved Disciple* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1992); James H. Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness Validates the Gospel of John?* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1995); Adele Reinhartz, *Befriending the Beloved Disciple: A Jewish Reading of the Gospel of John* (New York, NY/London: Continuum, 2001); Ismo Dunderberg, *The Beloved Disciple in Conflict? Revisiting the Gospels of John and Thomas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[42] Gerald Webb Broomfield, M.A., *John, Peter and the Fourth Gospel* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1934); Lutz Simon, *Petrus und derLieblingsjünger im Johannesevangelium: Amt und Autorität* (Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XXIII, Theologie; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994); Kevin Quast, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple: Figures of a Community in Crisis* (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 32; Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press/Sheffield Academic Press, 1989).

[43] Giovanna Summerfield & Lisa Downward, *New Perpectives on the European Bildungsroman* (London/New York: Continuum, 2010), 1.

[44] Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, *Speech, Genre and other Late Essays* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2004), 10.

[45] Randolph P. Shaffner, *The Apprenticeship Novel* (New York: Peter Lang, 1984), 3.

[46] Manfred Engel, "*Variants of the Romantic 'Bildungsroman'*" in *Romantic Prose Fiction*, ed. Gerald Gillespie, Manfred Engel & Bernard Dieterle (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2008), 263.

[47] Engel, "*Variants of the Romantic 'Bildungsroman'*".

[48] Engel, "*Variants of the Romantic 'Bildungsroman'*".

[49] Shaffner, *The Apprenticeship Novel*, 3.

[50] Engel, "*Variants of the Romantic 'Bildungsroman'*", 263.

[51] G Summerfield & L. Downward observe that for some *Bildungsroman* critiques society is receptive for male development alone. *New Perpectives...*, 170.

[52] Summerfield & Downward, *New Perpectives...*, 1.

[53] Chris Baldick, *Oxford Dictionary of literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 35.

[54] J. A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (Chichester: Wiley–Blackwell, 2013).

[55] As Bennema points out, scholars did not reach a consensus regarding the differences between ancient and modern characterization techniques and if they could be used simultaneously. Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 11.

[56] "The difference has to do with the distinction between characterization that is representational and characterization that is illustrative, a distinction that

is well known in literary circles." S. John Roth, *The Blind the Lame and the Poor: Character Types in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 77.

[57] Jack Miles, *God: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

[58] John Barton, *The Old Testament: Canon, Literature and Theology* (Society for the Old Testament Study Series; Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 182.

[59] Robert R. Robinson, "Patriarchal Narrative" in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity, vol. 4* (Brand Rapids, Michigan/Leiden: Willaim B. Eerdmans/Brill, 2005), 95–96.

[60] Professor Robert P. Gordon considers that the narrative known as the 'History of David's Rise from 2 Samuel 24–26 "merits the description as a *Bildungsroman*." *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Versions* (Society for the Old Testament Study Series; Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), xx. In the same order of ideas R. Alter notices that Shakespeare was able " to invent a kind of *Bildungsroman* for the young Prince Hal" (the young king Henry the Vth), starting with a series of hints of historical tradition, and a similar method can be identified in the portrayal of King David too. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 40–41.

[61] Susan Niditch, "Interpreting Esther: Categories, Contexts and Interpretive Ambiguities" in *The Writings and Later Wisdom Books*, ed. Christl M. Maier & Nuria Calduch–Benages (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014), 263.

[62] Carl A. Newson argues that the *Book of Job* can be seen as „a kind of *Bildungsroman* for the reader's moral imagination." *The Book of Job; A Contest of Moral Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 17–21.

[63] Newson understands "the slow and painful moral development of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 1–4 has something of a *Bildungsroman*. Newson, *Job*, 47. See also Carl A. Nelson, "God's Other: The Intractable Problem of the Gentile King in Judean and Early Jewish Literature" in *The 'Other' in Second Temple Judaism. Essays in Honor of John J. Collins*, ed. Daniel C. Harlow, Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew Goff, Joel S. Kaminsky (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 47.

[64] Rolf Romøren, "From Literary Text to Literary Field: Boys' Fiction in Norway between the Two World Wars: a Re-reading" in *The Presence of the Past in Children's Literature*, ed. Ann Lawson Lucas (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 18.

[65] Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples according to the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 154–60.

[66] Neil Easterbrook, "Bildungsroman" in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy*, ed. Gary Westhafl (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 1: 81.

[67] It is not uncommon to study characters in tandem. For example see Beirne, *Women and Men*.

[68] Robert R. Beck, *Nonviolent Story: Narrative Conflict Resolution in the*

Gospel of Mark (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008), 29.

    [69] Engel, „Bildungsroman," 264.

    [70] Baruch Hochman, *Character in Literature* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 56. See also William H. Shepherd, *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts* (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, 147; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 50.

    [71] Mark Stibbe, "Telling the Father's Story: The Gospel of John as Narrative Theology" in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, ed. John Lierman (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 173.

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Polysemy and Metaphor
in the Verbs of Perception

Mihaela Georgiana Manasia

ABSTRACT**:** This paper addresses the idea that has been recently put forward by several studies in the field of cognitive linguistics that perception verbs have a polysemous structure motivated by our experience and understanding of the world. Metaphor is not only characteristic of poetic language, but on the contrary, it can be found everywhere in everyday language and the polysemous character of perception verbs reflected into a wide range of syntactic and constructional alternatives makes them a motivating semantic field to approach in this respect.
KEY WORDS: polysemy, metaphor, perception verbs, prototypical meaning, metaphorical meaning.

Polysemy represents, within semantics, the term used to characterize the situation in which a word has two or more similar meanings. Despite this very simple definition, the concept of polysemy has been subject to controversies and continues to remain a debatable field in the linguistic research.

In 1980, the study of polysemy and metaphor expands within cognitive linguistics especially with Lakoff and Johnson's book *Metaphors We Live By.* They define polysemy as a systematic relation of meanings. It is perceived as categorization namely related meanings are organised into categories based on family resemblance.

Recent studies in the field of cognitive semantics have tried to put forward that perception verbs have a polysemous structure, motivated by our experience and understanding of the world. Metaphor represents one of the cognitive instruments structuring this variety of meanings and a part of everyday language that affects the way in which we think, perceive and act.

The authors of *Metaphors We Live By* criticized the classical theory of metaphor as a comparison, describing similarities that already exist. Metaphor creates similarities when we understand something in terms of something else. They stipulate that the majority of concepts allowing us to apprehend reality are metaphorical. The metaphorical conceptual system derives, according to them, from various concepts emerging from our direct interaction with the environment. Therefore, language in its most everyday usage is full of metaphors.

Metaphor is not only characteristic of poetic language, but on the contrary, it can be found everywhere in everyday language: "Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish—a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. . . . We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and language. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature."[1]

Nevertheless, this device must not be envisaged as a purely linguistic phenomenon, separated from thought because in fact, it represents one of the elements we use to understand the world: "human thought processes are largely metaphorical. . . . Metaphors as linguistic expressions are possible precisely because there are metaphors in a person's conceptual system."[2]

The traditional view on metaphor as characteristic of language rather than thought is thus replaced by the cognitive perspective envisaging metaphors as cognitive devices. Metaphors represent a matter of cognition and are central to conceptualising the surrounding world. Speakers involuntarily and unconsciously use certain metaphors namely the ones which are deeply rooted in our cognition. These are the so-called *conceptual metaphors*, a term used

to describe metaphor as a cognitive structure, the one providing the basis for different linguistic expressions.

Conceptual metaphors help us better conceptualize and comprehend concepts that are difficult to grasp. In fact, they enable human beings to partially understand what cannot be fully understood: feelings, consciousness, etc. Therefore, metaphor is not a problem of language but a way of conceptualizing one domain by reference to another: it allows, among others, for the description of a concept by borrowing terms from other areas when appropriate words do not exist. If one uses a more mathematical language, metaphor can be seen as a system of correspondences between a source domain and a target domain. "In metaphor, the structure of a given domain (called the *source* domain) is mapped onto a different one (the *target* domain), which as a result is structured and understood in terms of the first one. . . . Normally, source domains are more concrete than target domains. The realm of perception is a rather concrete domain and participates as source domain in several metaphors."[3]

In linguistics, it has been repeatedly pointed out that metaphor only gives us a partial understanding of the target domain, because it must necessarily focus on some aspects of the source domain while concealing others. Hence, totalizing and abstract concepts such as life, death, time etc. are understood due to a large number of metaphors, each giving rise to a large number of linguistic expressions.

Metaphor consists of transposing an existing relationship into a conceptual domain by applying certain qualities from one over the other. This is not random, being generally due not only to physical experience but also to cultural and social experiences.

Metaphors have been classified in various ways by linguists. According to Lakoff[4] there are three main types of metaphors: conventional metaphors, image—metaphors and generic—level metaphors. The conventional metaphors combine a conceptual domain to another, often associating several concepts of the source domain with several concepts of the target domain. Instead, image–metaphors, based on perception, are also conceptual but associate one image to another. In this case, the source and target

domains constitute images, our mental representations regarding a particular concept. It sometimes happens that two very different concepts have common physical characteristics when trying to represent them mentally. Thus, the principle of these metaphors consists of allocating certain concepts or physical properties from other concepts (such as size, shape, color. . . .) For example, when we say that a woman has an hourglass figure, we have a certain image of the wasp: it has a rather thin size. We then transpose this image onto that of a woman in order to state that she has thin waist. In fact, these are actually attributional metaphors because they attribute physical properties to concepts. Finally, the metaphor THE GENERIC IS SEEN AS THE SPECIFIC establishes a relationship between a specific structure and a more generic one. Due to this mechanism, we understand a generic situation in terms of specific, based on our ability to extract the generic from the specific.

The polysemous character reflected into a wide range of syntactic and constructional alternatives makes perception verbs a motivating semantic field to approach. A diversity of papers analysing the polysemous structure of perception verbs namely their semantic extensions has been drawn up by various linguists. What differentiates our research from others is that we envisage to contrastively analyze the non-prototypical meanings of perception verbs in English, Romanian and French.

One of the scholars performing this type of research is Viberg who studied verbs of perception in fifty—three languages belonging to fourteen linguistic families. This represents the first largest cross–linguistic study conducted in the field of semantic change. In the case of English, the first conclusion emerging consists of the strong polysemy within this semantic field: nine verbs share the fifteen possible meanings. Cross—linguistically, this is true, very few languages having fifteen different verbs. He has studied polysemy patterns by limiting his analysis only to passive verbs which are more polysemous than active or copulative verbs. All languages have polysemy patterns whose semantic changes correspond to the following scheme:[5]
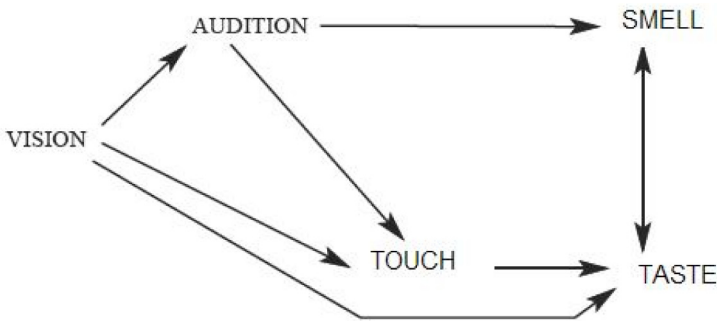
This scheme should be interpreted as follows: if initially, a verb expresses the visual modality, then the allowed extensions are directed towards audition, touch and taste. If the original meaning expresses audition, the possible extensions could be touch and smell. If initially the tactile modality is expressed, taste and smell represent the only possible semantic extensions. Finally, the verbs denoting taste and smell can extend their meanings towards smell respectively taste.

Another well–known linguist, Sweetser[6] showed interest in the study of the semantic extensions of perception verbs in English. She has advanced the concept of MIND AS BODY metaphor implying the conceptualization of one type of experience namely *the mind* in terms of another—*the body.* This metaphor could be considered the equivalent of Lakoff and Johnson's *conceptual metaphor.* Applying the MIND–AS–BODY conceptual metaphor to English perception verbs, "the metaphorical mappings take place between two domains of experience: the vocabulary of physical perception as the source domain and the vocabulary of the internal self and sensations as the target domain."[7]

According to Sweetser these correspondences go in a specific direction that is from the domain of bodily experience to that of cognitive and emotional states. This applies to English perception verbs whose metaphorical extensions cover two domains of experience: the source domain represented by the vocabulary of physical perception and the target domain expressed by the vocabulary of internal feelings.

OBJECTIVE + INTELLECTUAL	Sight → Knowledge, mental vision (e.g. 'I see', 'a clear presentation ↔ Control, monitoring ↑Physical manipulation, grasping (understanding =controlling) ↘Mental manipulation, control (understanding = grasping)	
INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION	Hearing → (physical reception)	Internal receptivity → Obedience (heedfulness vs. being deaf to a plea)
SUBJECTIVE + EMOTIONAL	FEEL → TASTE →	EMOTION PERSONAL PREFERENCE

The table above contains ways of semantic extension in English perception verbs identified by Sweetser:[8]

She considers vision to be the main source of collecting objective information given its capacity to select the prominent trait of one stimulus. This is one of the reasons she associates vision with the objective and cerebral part of our mental existence. Nonetheless, there are situations when vision and intellect appear to be subjective but she did not decide to explore this aspect as well. Hearing may also share the semantic extension of vision involving mental activities but they are of a different type because this sense does not allow us to manage the way we receive sounds. Touch can be put in relation with the emotional feeling while taste may allow for the expression of personal likes and dislikes in the mental world. With regard to the olfactory sense, links can be established between a bad smell and a "bad character or dislikeable mental characteristics (e.g. *stink*) and the detection of such characteristics (e.g. the active verb *smell*).[9]

The table of English perception metaphors proposed by Sweetser has been enriched with new semantic extensions in the case of the five types of perception. The table on the next page presents the list of the conceptual metaphors in perception verbs proposed by Ibarretxe–Antuñano.[10]

This list is relevant to the polysemous character of perception verbs and raises the issue of the motivated or arbitrary nature of the semantic extensions, of the capacity of verbs such as *see* (1) or *hear* (2) to be used with the meaning of *understand*:

(1) I *see* what you mean by that.

(2) If I *have heard* well, they want to say that I have no chance.

	METAPHORS IN THE PERCEPTUAL DOMAIN
VISION	Understanding is seeing Foreseeing is seeing Imagining is seeing Considering is seeing Studying / Examining is seeing Finding out is seeing Making sure is seeing Taking care is seeing / looking after Witnessing is seeing Suffering is seeing Obeying is seeing Refraining is seeing Being involved is having to see
HEARING	Paying attention is hearing Obeying is hearing Being told / knowing is hearing Understanding is hearing Being trained is being heard
TOUCH	Affecting is touching Dealing with is touching Considering is touching Persuading is touching
SMELL	Suspecting is smelling Sensing / guessing is smelling Investigating is smelling /sniffing around Showing contempt is sniffing Corrupting is smelling Not to get wind of something is not to smell Prophesying is smelling

The traditional hypothesis expressing the arbitrariness of the relation between the linguistic forms and concepts they represent is rejected by both Lakoff and Sweester. "Human conceptual categories and the meaning of linguistic structures at any level are not a set of universal abstract features or uninterpreted symbols; they are motivated and grounded more or less directly in experience, in our bodily, physical and socio–cultural experiences. This notion of *motivated* language is known in Cognitive Linguistics as *embodiment*."[11]

Provided that such a concept as embodiment exists, we can put forward the hypothesis that perception metaphors have to be motivated and derived from the way we experience and understand the senses. Human mental faculties (cognition, affection, emotion, etc.) can be metaphorically equated to perceptual processes. The

metaphor *Cognition is Perception* is one of the most recurrent in language as our corpus–based analysis will prove. As already mentioned, a connection between perception verbs such as '*see*' and '*hear*' and the meanings of *understand / know* can be established:

(3) "Ah, certainly–I *see* now: you are the favoured possessor of the beneficent fairy,"

I remarked, turning to my neighbour.[12]

(4)'It is Jane Eyre, sir.'

—"Soon to be Jane Rochester," he added: "in four weeks, Janet, not a day more. Do you *hear* that?"[13]

The varying degree of reliability and exactness of the information received via senses may also help us to explain certain metaphorical projections of perception verbs. The following set of examples, allowing us to prove this hypothesis, contains identical sentences except for the verb:

(5)   a. He *saw* that there would be problems.
      b. He *heard* that there would be problems.
      c. He *smelt* that there would be problems.

The meaning of the visual verb in (5a) is *know*, that of *heard* is *to be told* while the olfactory verb *smell* has the meaning of *to guess, to suspect*. Although these verbs belong to different perception modalities, they are somehow similar in that they all express the idea of *knowledge*. In spite of the similarities, the meaning conveyed by each sentence is different according to the type of knowledge the verb suggests. Interpretations such as *He knew something wasn't right*, *He was told something wasn't right* and *He suspected something wasn't right* are different as to the degree of reliability and accuracy between the information the perceiver collects and the real object of perception.

In (5a), it is the perceiver himself who has realized that something was wrong after processing in his or her own manner some clues s/he saw. Example (5b) expresses the idea of less reliable information because what somebody else tells us is not as accurate as when we see it with *our own eyes*. In (5c), the verb of olfactory perception renders the idea of a type of knowledge even less accurate than the hearing verb because the perceiver does not have enough information to base his assumption on.

In conclusion, these senses allow us to formulate hypotheses regarding the nature and characteristics of the objects we perceive corresponding more or less accurately to the nature of the real object. The information provided by visual perception, and consequently, the hypothesis formulated on the basis of that information is normally more accurate than that gathered by the sense of hearing or smell. Consequently, the use of metaphorical expressions containing verbs such as *see*, *hear*, or *smell* allow us to map that experience from the domain of physical perception onto the more abstract domain of knowledge.

NOTES

[1] George, Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago (University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3.

[2] Ibid., 6.

[3] Rojo, Ana, and Javier Valenzuela. "Frame Semantics and Lexical Translation: the RISK frame and its translation." *Babel* Volume 44, No 2. (1998).

[4] Lakoff, George. *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things. What Categories Reveal about the Mind.* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1987), 31–50.

[5] Äke Viberg,. *"The verbs of perception: a typological study"* in *Explanations for Language Universals* ed. B. Comrie and O. Dahl (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1984), 23.

[6] Sweetser, Eve. *From etymology to pragmatics. Metaphorical and cultural aspects of semantic structure*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[7] Neagu, Mariana. *Cognitive Linguistics. An introduction*, (Bucureşti: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică, 2005), 84.

[8] Sweetser, *From etymology to pragmatic,* 38.

[9] Ibarretxe–Antuñano, Iraide. "Polysemy and Metaphor in Perception Verbs: A Cross–Linguistic Study*",* (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1999), 113.

[10] Ibarretxe–Antuñano, Iraide. 'MIND–AS–BODY as a Cross–linguistic Conceptual Metaphor'. *Miscelánea. A Journal of English and American studies 25* (2002): 114.

[11] Ibarretxe–Antuñano, Iraide, Vision Metaphors for the Intellect: Are they Really Cross–Linguistic? *ATLANTIS. Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo–American Studies 30.1* (2008): 18.

[12] Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre.* (Great Britain: HarperCollins*Publishers, 2010),* 17*.*

[13] Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. (Penguin Books, 1994), 261.

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The Imperative Progress Versus the Ethics of Moderation: Future Expectations in the Society of Knowledge

Arthur Wagner

ABSTRACT: The 20th and 21st century are characterized by a strong urge for progress in the field of technology, knowledge, communication and business. These structural changes patronized the emergence of a knowledge society, where knowledge is the basis of economic and social growth. The other side of progress is characterized by ambivalent effects. While the idea of progress is based on development and crossing the institutionalized limits, the ethics of responsibility starting from respecting the limits and the temperature, following the aim of sustainability. Hans Jonas sets with his principle the responsibility of a distinctive scale both in dealing with the present and with the future. Without an interdisciplinary exchange, the ethics of moderation proves in its action to be guidance, but only limited. The wider actual acceptance of "sustainability" reveals its chances towards becoming a global ethos.

KEY WORDS: imperative progress, knowledge society, ethic, moderation, responsibility, future.

The Society of Knowledge and the Imperative Progress

372 years ago, René Descart wrote the following in his third meditation *Principia Philosophiae*:

> Perhaps all the perfections that I attribute to God preserve in me some kind of capability. . . . I am doing this already in

my experience, and so my knowledge is gradually growing. And I do not see what stands in the way to grow more and more to infinity and why am I not able to achieve all the other perfections of God, with such increased knowledge?" (Descartes 1986, 48)

Had Descartes predicted that the instinct of knowledge, which would be developed endlessly in order to reach a divine perfection, is truly as innocent as it looks? Is this demand just a scientific curiosity as those of the Pythagoreans or of Johannes Kepler, which should lead to the edification of the harmony of laws of nature? The instinct ok knowledge tends towards power—as Bacon and Freud noticed. (see Freud 1940; Bacon 1613). Man wants to finally overcome his dependence; he wants to no longer belong to nature, but instead, he wants nature to belong to him.

The 20th century was characterized by an increasing acceleration and expansion of transport and communication, of the scientific system and by an increase of the investments in research and development as trends in social change. (see Bell 1973; Stehr 1994). The result was the change in the perception of time, destruction of distances, creation of national markets, expansion of national and international contacts, globalization, horizons` enlargement, both positive and negative, and the standardization of timekeeping. A successful social movement was developed, where the concepts of religion, thinking and action were questioned. (see Beck 2007, 392).

In addition, there were recorded the incipient radical changes in the working environment and—parallel with this—the social forms of organization by information technologies. (see Castells 1996). So, the discussion was focused predominantly on the advancement of information and knowledge society in the first wave in the 1970s[1] (see Böhme/Stear 1986; Kreibich 1986; Stehr 1994; Schmiede in Gamm u.a. 2004, 38) and in this way it attracted attention on the academic activity, of the experts circles at the universities and companies level. A qualitative trend became apparent. Since the mid–1990s, the second wave has expanded this focus. (see Drucker 1994a and Drucker 1994b, Stehr 1994, Knorr–Cetina 1998).

This influenced both the construction of scientific societies and their development, reinforced by an altered character of science itself. Thus, *knowledge* became in the postindustrial society a basic structural politic dimension, an essential principle and a progress fundament. The development of the knowledge society is due to the structural changes of the economy, which increasingly supports the economic capital on knowledge. If the industrial society is based on property and labor, knowledge enters into the scientific society as a new principle. (Stehr /Adolf 2015, 220).

Nobody would deny today that we are living in a knowledge society. The rapid change, the increasing knowledge of the people, simultaneously forces to the ongoing adjustment, to changes in qualification, to lifelong learning, openness and flexibility. As a guiding concept, the term information and knowledge society receives the promise of an era where, during its transgression, the man gets closer to the ideal of self–fulfillment. This contrasts with the pessimistic conceptions around the terms: risk, uncertainty, declining authority of the experts, assembling presumption of an unjustified and illegitimate authority. (Beck 1986; Beck et.al. 1994)

Furthermore, the explosion of media and knowledge is hiding with all its communication possibilities, by intellectual and cognitive overload, new exclusions in the form of access restrictions, commercialization of knowledge or confusion, even with the risk of reality loss. (Ulfing 2003, 35). This is because the modernity of the 21st century is supported by the trend of attainment the "progress until the end." Due to faster and faster developments and to a more accurate time measurement, modernity is a "culture of time". The time destroyed the space and the modern man breaks it as well, "carried away by changes, being devoured by acceleration."(Schmid 1998a, 98; 1993, 31ff).

In this context it was discussed about a "culture of crises" which has reached the peak of the development taking into consideration both the advantages and the problems that came along the way. (Schmid 1998, 101). The hope and improvement of life quality[2] on the one hand and fears on the other hand will be the sacrificed for the own creation of technique and science.

The proliferation of scientific knowledge leads to the modernization of the society, but it also brings along uncertainty. This ambivalence represents a challenge for the future. This is because the developments of modern societies bring along certain fragility to the contemporary knowledge society due to their complexity. This process is far from being complete. (Stehr / Adolf 2015, 220)

The Ethics of Moderation and Responsibility

The ethics of responsibility try to offer as answer guidance to the new society structure, as the ethics an ethic of moderation. Today, ethics must be strengthen by having discussed more conflicts, based on a pluralist approach. (Huber 2013, 9). This is remarked among other things even in the great demand of ethics committees, convened on professional, religious, economic and political level.

The idea of progress is based on crossing over the limits of growth, while the ethics of responsibility is based on minding these limits and moderation, for the purpose of sustainability. It evaluates the idea of progress—which is based on growth—the setting of limits as a loss, while the ethics of responsibility evaluates this positively. (Stückelberger 1997, 342–343).

The modern ethics of responsibility is closely linked to the ethics of the mass, which is justified both philosophically and theologically. Hereinafter, the selected *philosophical* perspectives of Dieter Birnbacher, Hans Jonas, Georg Picht and Wilhelm Schmid will be explained.

The German philosopher Birnbacher founded his ethics anthropocentrically and started with the question of the use and preservation of nature and people. The utilitarian principle—"the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people"—is further expanded to include the responsibility for the future generations. (Birnbacher 1988 cited in: Stückelberger 1997, 108)

Birnbacher starts from the egoist's premise and then of the rational collectivism and reaches in the end at the rational universalist, which is capable of taking decisions oriented towards benefit, without taking into consideration his own preferences.

(Birnbacher 1988, 57) Even if later on Birnbacher admits that this is an ideal case, there still remain some open questions regarding the acquisition of motivation for a responsible behavior.

The German Jewish philosopher Hans Jonas sustains less than others the issue of the responsibility dealings with the progress. In his work *The Principle of Responsibility* (1979), he replies imperative to the progress with an attitude of restraint. (Stückelberger 1997, 210)

Jonas explains his concept of responsibility based on the advancing technology (Huber 2013, 119) and sees the danger in the fact that the modern technologies—which originally served for the society`s welfare—have changed their purpose. Even if technologies are necessary to sustain life, they also endanger the natural resources of life preservation for the future. On top of this, there is the fact that technology and the exact science of nature have unilaterally promoted the superiority of the human nature. (Jonas 1987, 40)

At the same time, W. E. Müller sees in the nowadays technology no longer a mean to achieve a certain goal, but the compulsive urge for development, for satisfying the needs and at the same time, for creating new ones. (Müller 1988, 17)

By becoming aware of the future effects, Jonas linked the knowledge to the future prospect, in order to move from motivation to action.

> By this connection with the feeling, which gives an answer for the future human condition, contributes such a preview to humanization of scientific and technical knowledge. This has to be merged in the future with people's knowledge when extrapolating. (Jonas/ Mieth 1983, 21)

Jonas' *Responsibility* leads to moderation, not only in the consumer's sector or in the acquisition of power, but also in the field of "human excellence." (Jonas 1985, 70) His ethics of responsibility is a request for pause and understanding. (Stückelberger 1997, 212)

The philosopher Georg Picht has also developed a "term of measure" (Picht in Eisenbart 1979), inspired by the Greek

philosophy, as a draft of a cosmic order. He sees in the measure exceeding, the cause of the downfall of companies as well as of individuals. Growth does not mean for him to reach a maximum, but to move in the range of a "relative optimum." (Picht in Eisenbart, 1979 cited in Stückelberger 1997, 214)

Picht sees in *responsibility*—a term constituted from a double significance, namely the responsibility "towards something/ somebody" and the responsibility "for something/somebody"—a important theme for the present. (Picht 1969, 7. 320)

In the same direction, the German representative of the art of living philosophy, Wilhelm Schmid, discusses about the necessity of creating a new ethics "considering the exuberant possibilities of modernity" (Schmid 1998, 100; see Höffe 1993) and its large foreign destination potential.

The concept of *freedom* was particularly understood in the modern age as a liberation from bondage. On the other hand, the released individual cannot live without ties. His approach is to have a balance—as an exciting harmony in tension between freedom and commitment, progress and equality, self determination and heteronomy, community and self, between the rational pragmatism and romantic idealism. At the same time, the measure of the center is not clearly defined, but it represents a vacillation between too much and too little. (Schmid 2004, 266ff.)

An Outlook: Future Prospects

The findings of the future research point out to a stronger future expression of the service society, where a transfer of goods would be held for the export of knowledge. This means that the know–how is sold as a service. This is because the capital of the future service society is based on "research and development, planning and design, marketing and distribution." (Opaschowski 2013, 84)

"Who stops learning in the future—can stop living as well." (Opaschowski 2013, 489) Knowledge acquisition, horizons' broadening, formal and also informal education should gain more

importance in the future, considering the voluntary experiential learning. (Ibid.; see Horx 2002, 154–155)

It is clear that the Western European future moves in the area of the information society and economic and social sustainability, between the urge for progress and coming back. That is why it is important to develop actionable ways and scenarios that stand between these two poles. (Steinmüller and others 2000, 51)

From this background on it emerged the question about the opportunities and borders of an ethics of responsibility, respectively of moderation in the design of a sustainable future concept. Only the criticism of the growth and progress delusion is not enough; instead, it is recommended to have a strategy of the value balance rather than one–sided value maximization. (Stückelberger 2013, 342) The potential of the new one must not be lost from sight.

The different approaches make it clear that the drafts of such an ethics should consider both economic and political structures. Since the aspect of human development and of growth is also vital, this should be considered sufficient, because the connection between the environment and growth and the various conflicts of interest and survival or development needs are not adequate in many ethical approaches. (Stückelberger 2013, 225)

In this context, space should be also created to the desire for positive border crossings. (see Schärli 1992, 109ff.). At the same time, there appears the need to make the value of "moderation" attractive and with positive content, in terms of a profit. In case of a *collective consumer behavior*, the possible therapeutic approaches should be taken into consideration. (Stückelberger 2013, 343) Only if new economic possibilities are created and if resources are enabled, individuals and institutions can gain benefits from the social change. (Pinquart/Silbereisen in Hasselhorn/Schneider 2007, 451)

Even if the ethics of moderation can offer valuable guidance in the current value conflicts, their contribution proved to be limited. Without any interdisciplinary exchange, their effect often sums up to a decelerating appeal. (Stückelberger 2013, 144) However, the increasingly broad acceptance of the value of *sustainability* shows that there is a chance to establish a global ethics of moderation and of responsibility and this to be accepted as a common value basis.

(Either from responsibly ethical or egoistic–utilitarian reasons) (Ibid. 225)

Because with the knowledge of the ethics of moderation in the background, there is a possibility that modernity does not stop, but expands the category of *sustainability*. (see Brenner 1996, 134) In the future, an "ethics of sustainability" is possible to be developed from different ethical suppositions about responsibility and temperance.

Binde highlights in this context the necessity of integrating the future in the present decisions. The future requires an active attitude of the individuals, and also the questioning of flexibility as principle and the emphasis on responsibility and caution in the field of cultural heritage. (Binde 2007, 320ff.)

Opaschowski (2013) sees the necessity of creating a comprehensive and holistic prosperity concept, that is human and not economically oriented. Because the responsibility for the present is not sufficient, but it requires a "forward–thinking responsibility" for the next generations, in the opinion of Hans Jonas: "Act in such a way for your actions to be compatible with the permanency of real human life on earth." (Jonas 1979, 36)

Since in the future is predicting a progressive knowledge explosion in connection with the acceleration processes, power and responsibility as well as knowledge and foreknowledge go hand in hand. (Opaschowski 2013, 724; see Horx 2002, 154–155) At this point, the challenge of a multidisciplinary research is added, allowing the further insight in the context conditions of the knowledge society, risk factors and resource optimization. Thus, there are repercussions of modern knowledge society both for the ethical and political–educational challenge of the 21st century.

NOTES

[1] Final report of the Federal Ministry for Education, Science, Research and Technology, a contract in which a thousand of experts were involved: "Knowledge is always central as a precondition for the agreement on common objectives, for securing the scientific development, as well as for social actions and social position of individuals" (cited from ZEIT v.16.7.98:31 in Wingens 1999)

² This gives the individuals the possibility to live life after their own ideas. Theoretical descriptions of the society such as multi–option society (Gross 1994), experience–driven society (Schulze 1992) or information society (Castells 1996) are attempts for a differentiated knowledge or service society with the perspective of the subjective possibilities to participate in the structural changes.

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The Role of Worldview in Hermeneutics

Liviu Ursache

ABSTRACT: There are different venues to knowledge and their importance in the process depends very much on the worldview on holds on to. I have pointed out some ways in which both modernism and postmodernism influences someone's hermeneutics, with predilection for theological hermeneutics. Even though a lot could be said about the core ideas of the two worldviews mentioned above, I am more interested, in this article, in highlighting how these could help out the interpreter in the process of knowing. In the same way, any other view of world, in future, would help the interpreter in ways former worldviews did not.
KEY WORDS: knowledge, modernism, postmodernism, hermeneutics, method, interpretation.

One's worldview permeates all the domains of life, including that of epistemology.[1] Thus, people come to know things according to the way they view life. There are many venues of knowledge such as: nature, reason, experience, intuition and so on, but some of them play a more important part than others, depending on the worldview one holds on to. I must admit that even though I live in a postmodern context, when it comes to knowledge I tend to appeal more to reason than to experience.

In modernism, in the act of knowing, there is a fundamental separation between the subject and object. Thus, one could know whether one interpretation is adequate or not. Most modern thinkers agree that there is such a thing as absolute truth, one that could be traced when a certain scientific method is applied. These kind of

methods would take one interpreter from the darkness of the lack of knowledge to the light of knowing certain universal facts. There is a clear distinction between reality and mere opinion. When it came to a text, hermeneutics is perceived as the science of interpretation in which the subject, namely the interpreter, interprets the object, namely the text. And thus, the modernists need a rigorous method in order to know the things.

The paradigm has shifted nowadays, as we moved to postmodernism, where experience plays a greater role. What is perceived as being true is only the product of the cultural context. All is subject to interpretation, even those domains that are traditionally known as scientific. Even more, in hermeneutic language could not express universal truth. That would mean that any and all language fails to describe the universal limitations of all languages. This kind of statement, therefore, discredits itself. For all its protests about the illegitimacies of *"metanarratives"* (worldviews), postmodernism offers a metanarrative of its own—one that cannot be true given its own precepts.[2] However, a postmodern does not seem to bother with this self–contradictory principle, as if logic is not necessary in acquiring knowledge.

Even though I find faults in the postmodern worldview, I do acknowledge on one hand that almost worldviews have their weakness and on the other hand postmodernism brings its strengths in the field of interpretation. My purpose in this paper is to point out some of the negative as well as positive aspects which postmodernism brings up in the interpretation of a text. The interpreter, especially in the theological field of hermeneutics, needs to be aware of the threats that postmodernism poses, while integrating the positive results of this worldview.

The Uncertainty of What We Perceive to Know

Wilhelm Dilthey was the first one to give hermeneutics an "ontological turn."[3] His contribution to hermeneutics consists in relating it with human sciences. For Dilthey, interpretation means the unification of subject and object in a single historical act of understanding. The

reader is in a more privileged position than the author because he can both deal with the mind of the author and bring more technics in interpretation. It follows that he could create meanings that could be more profound than what the authors might have created.[4]

The text makes sense only when the interpreters approach it and could find significance for life and thus limiting the meaning of the text to what corresponds to personal experience. The concept of "new hermeneutic" turns its attention to how could the ancient texts communicate with power and freshness for today. It studies everything though the lens of contemporaneity. Since the reality is fluctuating, the meaning of a text could neither be a fixed one nor authoritative. The stress in on the interpreter's creative capacity to deal with a text, since they are not limited by the rules of the traditional and dogmatic hermeneutic.

The characteristic of this hermeneutic is the weakening of the distinction between subject and object. The interpreter brings a whole baggage of pre–understanding to the text. "Even the questions that the interpreter is asking (or fails to ask) reflect the limitations determined by that baggage. These pre-understandings would determine the answers that come from the text and also the way they are interpreted."[5]

One caveat of postmodern hermeneutics is the uncertainty of knowledge. We cannot know what we need to know because there are many factors that can thwart the understanding. For one the text may say something while for another the meaning could be a totally different thing and there is no way to check whose interpretation is more adequate. Knowledge is not possible anymore as it used to be for the modernists. The reason why for this state of things lies in the reaction of postmodern to the modern assertion of truth. Thus, statements about religious claims, moral principles and even about scientific facts cannot refer to objective states of affairs.[6]

Postmodern epistemology encourages us to acknowledge that there is no ground for foundationalism, there is no room for certainty. There is always the aspect of human's error. Also, the method applied to discover the truth is not set, it depends on the context. Language is subject to local communities and it cannot move beyond its own context and refer to realities outside itself. Words have significance

through their role in the certain contexts and not by their relation to some timeless entities, with the categories understood by both philosophers and common people.

Truth could not be universal, even when we talk about scientific discoveries. This is why feelings can be a source of knowledge. The interpreters are never passive recipients of either data or experiences unless one has to ignore the complex horizons of human beings. Also, there is no way one can escape his presuppositions, preunderstandings or traditions, things one interpreter is always bringing to the text. That brings relativism in the act of knowing.

One interpreter cannot come to the objective truth of the text. Simply, one has no access to what the text really says. There is only one truth—that which is interpreted. Meaning has nothing to do with what the author has to say but with what the interpreter sees or understands. This perspective is known as "new critique"[7] and holds that one written, the text is an independent entity and is on its own. The author does not matter anymore because the meaning of the text is up to the interpreter or, rather, to the worldview that one holds on to. The new hermeneutics presupposes that the interpreter dialogues with the text in order to connect to an historical context and a language that are different. He needs to find the original intent so that it could be contextualized and, in the same time, to have the same impact for nowadays. When the text influences somebody's life, then it becomes truth for that person.[8]

Thus, there needs to be a dialogue between the subject and the object so that the questions that are being asked and answered determine him to see things differently; this interaction determines a process through which the hermeneutical circle is being shaped. Some authors prefer the phrase "hermeneutical spiral,"[9] in order to show that the interpreter is not taking a vicious circle. So, as the interpreter interacts more and more with the text and his understanding aligns with that of the author.

Even the distinction between the subject and the object of hermeneutic is not total, the interpreter could always ask what the intention of the author was. The role of this hermeneutics is that of emphasizing the distinction between the understanding and the

text itself. This teaches us that we are limited and that we need to be aware of our pre-understandings when dealing with the text.

The Added Knowledge an Interpreter Brings to the Text

Postmodernism builds up on the weaknesses of the modern worldview. The latter stresses out that absolute certainty is possible and that ultimately, science reveals truth. The former, however, considers that the interpreter does not need to have as his goal perfect objectivity but rather objectivity within the limits of some essential presuppositions. This is a challenge, but it is the call of the interpreter. Thus, interpretation is text oriented rather than author oriented. Even though the relationship speaker–listener is lost in the text, the latter could share the world of the text. So, while the objectivity of the goal of the author is always a theoretical construction, the referent world, created by the author includes the reader.[10]

The text in not linear, as it is the case when one interprets the text with the authorial intention lens, but is multidimensional, as it does not offer itself to reading on a single level but on more levels in the same time to a historical community that has heterogeneous goals. Thus, the reader is included in the text; he is part of the text. Paul Ricoeur said: "just as a hermeneutic that stresses out the intention of the author tends to give a statute of unicity for the sense of a text, as it tends to reduce the meaning of the author to a unique intention, in the same way a hermeneutic that is interested in the history of reception would take into account the irreducible plurivocity of the text."[11]

Thus, Ricoeur believes that when the interpreter studies a text he interprets himself. A kind of mutual choice takes place between the text and the interpreter and this process in known as "hermeneutical circle". This is not a vicious only when the studied text is considered as sacred and the interpreter refers to an authority. Thus, the text and the interpreter could not change places, which in the words of Ricoeur, show a difference of "altitude".[12]

While denying the objectivity of interpretation, which theological hermeneutics would always hold against because of its subsequent relativism, the merit of postmodernism lies in the recognition of the human factor in acquiring the knowledge. Two things are worth underlining when taking into consideration the input of the interpreter: the tradition of the text and its relationship with the living community.

For the first aspect, the wise emperor Solomon once said: "nothing new under the sun."[13] Applied in the area of hermeneutics, it means there is no singular interpretation. Anything that is being said today, all interpretations, has been also done in the past too. Thus, the interpreter is dependent on the work of his forerunners, even though there are some naïve interpreters, who believe they could interpret a text without help from others. Don Carson believes that the "exegesis could never be done in a vacuum."[14] It is absurd to believe that one's background does not influence his exegesis. We definitely could not establish a certain pattern for the influences, but one can be sure that his community irrevocably determines the way he views and interprets the texts.

Also, the interpretation of a text could not be separated from the contemporary community. The third element of the interpretative triangle is the reader. Ricoeur said: "in the end, the text exists because of a community, to be used in a community and to shape that community. If we consider that the relation with the author is the background of the text, then the relation with the reader is the foreground. In this case we firmly consider that foreground is more important than the background."[15]

The interpreter could not ignore the world he lives in. One would always compare the results of his interpretation with the reality of the community he lives in. In this way, a symbiosis is created between the world of the text and that of the community. Ricoeur believes that "a text separated from its ties with the community is as good as a corpse."[16] This principle could be also observed in the Jewish tradition. In Judaism there is a written Torah but also one that is orally transmitted. There is no break between them as the latter is considered an extension of the former, of its vitality and capacity of filling the temporal horizon.

One, definitely, comes to know things when the text in analyzed against the backdrop of contemporaneity. Most likely this is what Hirsch had in mind when he distinguished between meaning and significance.[17]

Conclusions

This article does not seek to respond to either modernism or postmodernism but rather to point out some of their contribution to epistemology. Chronologically, the postmodern worldview follows the modern one and today there are some voices that speak of a post-postmodern view. This means that there is always movement in terms of how people see life and the interpreter of a text needs to understand the times in order to see how knowledge is acquired.

For a theological interpret knowledge is possible because the truth is out there, in the text, and could be discovered through adequate methods of biblical studies. In the same time, however, there needs to be humbleness from the interpreter's part in recognizing his/her limits due to the human condition. That helps the interpreter to appreciate the value of the community.

Through this article I wanted to show that there is always bad and good news as to the emphasis people give to different venues of knowing, of course within certain limits. As humans we are limited and at times we emphasize on aspect of knowing, just as moderns did with the scientific methods, and later we swing the pendulum on the very opposite because we missed the value of community and experience in the process of knowing.

I like the perspective of Paul, the apostle, on the future of knowledge. He writes to the Corinthians, to people whom interest was turned to knowledge. He tells his readers that on this side of heaven they can only know in part but on the other side they would fully know: "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known."[18]

NOTES

[1] Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, *Istoria filosofiei, de la începuturi până la Renaştere* (Cluj–Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2005), 34–7.

[2] D.A. Carson, *The Dangers and Delights of Postmodernism*, Modern Reformation (Cf. http://www.modernreformation.org/default.php?page=articl edisplay&var2=281 Last accessed on April 15, 2016.)

[3] Ramberg, Bjørn and Gjesdal, Kristin, *Hermeneutics*, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), (Cf. http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/hermeneutics/   Last accessed on April 20, 2015.)

[4] Grant R. Osborne, *The hermeneutical spiral: A comprehensive introduction to biblical interpretation*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), 468.

[5] Don A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd edition, (Grand Rapids, MI:Baker Books, 1996), 126.

[6] Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Chapter 2.

[7] John Stonestreet, *Understanding the Times,* gen. ed. David Nobel, Student Manual, (Manitou Springs, CO: Summit Press, 2006), 97.

[8] Anthony C. Thiselton, "A New Hermeneutic," *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods,* ed. I. Howard Marshall (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 308–33.

[9] Grant R Osborne, *The hermeneutical spiral: A comprehensive introduction to biblical interpretation.* This author believes that hermeneutics is a spiral from text to context—a move between the horizon of the text to that of the reader and which draws closer to the intention of the text and its significance for today. Osborne develops his argument in each of the three sections of his books: general hermeneutics (grammar, semantics, syntax and context), genres and applied hermeneutics.

[10] Paul Ricoeur, *The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation*, (Philosophy Today 17, 1973), 135–41.

[11] La Cocque, Andre şi Paul Ricoeur, *Cum să înţelegem Biblia*, 6.

[12] *Ibidem.*

[13] *Bible*, Ecclesiastes 1:9.*New American Standard Bible:* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

[14] Don A.Carson, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: the Possibility of the Systematic Theology*, 92.

[15] James Sire, *The Universe Next Door, 4th ed*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 237.

[16] La Cocque, Andre şi Paul Ricoeur, *Cum să înţelegem Biblia,* (Iaşi, Romania: Polirom, 2000), 7.

[17] Hirch, *Validity in Interpretation*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

[18] *Bible,* 1 Co 13:12. *New American Standard Bible:* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

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The Influence of the Religious Phenomenon in the Contemporary Society

Ion–Lucian Răcilă

ABSTRACT: Social influence of the religious phenomenon, is a complex phenomenon, especially in contemporary society, which takes account of certain indicators such as: context of religious freedom, religious language or religious speech, religious affiliation, religious practice; attitudes of religious groups or religious institutions on society and on social security; the impact of specific religious groups, secret societies, mysteries on the population firms. In order to be objective and to have the right attitude towards certain aspects that define contemporary society issues on the globalization, integration, secularism, atheism indifference, pluralism, it is first necessary that these issues be carefully studied, known and understood in the context of contemporary society. The phenomenon of secularization, globalization, religious indifference, not social issues but social phenomena, specific ways of expression of contemporary society.
KEY WORDS: religious phenomenon, secularization, globalization, pluralism, atheism

Introduction

Changes in the last quarter of the twentieth century who closed the millennium and the beginning of the new XXI century are, to an extent still unexplored, large religious battles, in which the state of the world hangs more and more on the religious condition of man. The new millennium also began in a secularized note, increased progressively to world atheism that combines hedonism and gospel

with market Communism Marxist, to end on a religious note of incredible purity, in an opposite state, even on the opposite pole.

Cannot be ignored at all, the relationship between the ethical and religious sentiment organization and the dimension born from this, which may take the form of a tension, in other words fanaticism or of a set of values that organizes modernity. The stake of such debates is much more dramatic than in the case of statute, which the authority of the state reserves for a Christian symbol; the stake being the very survival of an order based on equality before the law and uniformity of legal regime applicable to all citizens. In this framework, democratic intolerance becomes a way to protect a core of values, and the resurgence of fanaticism cannot be stopped only by the call to defense means of constitutional democracy itself.

In order to be objective and to have a correct attitude towards some aspects that define contemporary society realities on the globalization, integration, secularism, atheism—indifference, pluralization, it is first necessary that these issues be carefully studied, known and understood in the context of contemporary society. Secularization, globalization, religious indifference, do not represent social issues, but social phenomena, specific ways of expression of contemporary society.

On the other hand, it is necessary to understand the modern forms in which religiosity expresses in contemporary society, where we must consider the particular logic of relations between religion and modernity. These relations between modernity and religion, plus the secularization paradigm, can be understood "by the logic of a game with zero result: the modern advances, the religion regresses."[1]

Although all forecasts seem pessimistic, J. P. Willaime contradicts the linear interpretation above stating that lowering social influence of religion does not necessarily mean the disappearance of religion, but only a relative decrease of its authority in society being influenced by socio–historians. So, religion will not disappear from society and modern human concerns regardless influence or developments of modernity, but will recompose by different rules.[2]

Contemporary Trends of Religion in Society

Human rights and social values, religious pluralism and identity, contemporary justice and its effectiveness, individual's autonomy and local tradition, integration and tolerance, cannot always be put into balance without loss, risk and sacrifice.[3]

Developing new and interesting forms of recomposition of the religious in manifests concomitantly with social power of religion which is in confrontation with the characteristic elements of the decrease of namely modernity functional differentiation, globalization, individualization, rationalization, secularization and pluralism.

At a brief analysis of the religious contemporary we observe that it is no longer expressed only in its purely traditional but appear competitive, various types of religiosity can be called "secular cults"—a form of "hybrid" scattered between faith and disbelief, thus defining explanatory relations between modernity and religious tradition.

This hybrid can be seen especially in how the faith is expressed in modern human behavior in the absence of ecclesiastical affiliations. Grace Davie speaks *believing Without Belonging*,[4] a phenomenon that inevitably leads to the weakening of traditional religious institutions and thus to a flourishing of new forms of religiosity.[5]

Researchers Hervieu–Leger and F. Champion considers that modernity does not diminish the importance of the religious and its social role, but knows an emotional renewal and a return to the mystical ecstasy. A strong development of religious effervescent practices as emotional communities, can be easily seen where the religious paradox secular societies makes possible the cohabitation between "a historical process of secularization of modern societies and the development of mobile and flexible individual religiosity leaves space and facilitates the emergence of novel forms of religion sociability."[6]

1. Religious Pluralism and its Universal Typologies

Religious Pluralism in the United States

In the social landscape of the contemporary world, in terms of religion are a few modern guidelines that define very well the present trends: secularization, globalization, secularization, atheism and not least religious pluralism.

When approaching modern religious pluralism, and we want to do this from the origins, we must take into consideration the U.S. American pluralism is the one who takes the advances ideas of English and French thinkers before they were applied even in their own countries. In fact, the beginnings of American history, those who came in search of religious freedom, have not fully learned the lessons of the past. They wanted to defend their particular faith and they found no other way than to replicate the European model of organization and religious oppression. So the first wave of settlers practiced intolerance.[7]

In 1692 religious persecution starts, being held the Salem witch trials. In 1700, the government of Virginia forbade Catholic priests to spread the ideas and officiate religious services. Intolerance period was also quite long in America.

The principle of religious pluralism was promoted and defended by Thomas Jefferson, author of "American Declaration of Independence" and James Madison, the main help of "American Declaration of Human Rights". Based on this principle, all churches have equal rights, and the first article of the Bill of Right Amendment reads: "Congress shall accept no law in order to recognize any religion or prohibit freedom of religion . . . ." Madison wrote that civil and religious rights are the two sides of the coin of freedom and that the diversity of multiplicity was the best guarantee against the tyranny of the majority, whether it was secular or religious.[8]

Religious Pluralism in Australia

Australia is a genuine model of religious pluralism similar to the US, but otherwise formed because individuals are less concerned with religious issues. Worship and faith was a support

for secular purposes: maintaining order, culture and civilization, social cohesion and homogenization. As modernization of society, secular organization and legislation, the role of religion has declined. A guarantee of religious freedom in Australia, was the large number of emigrants' confessions. Religion was transformed into a personal matter, while the secularization of the population does not eliminate the religious forms of administrative and legal system: oath on the Bible in court, starting with a prayer the meetings at Parliament.

The separation between public and private sectors does not exclude differences that arise between tradition and new religions; fundamentalist groups deny the newcomers. Although there are some more problems, they are at a very small scale and anyone can recognize that in Australia religious freedom and pluralism prevails.[9]

Belief in a deity form remains strong. An Australian study (2009) organized by the National University on social attitudes, reported that 45% of Australians agree that "it is something beyond this life that makes sense at all," while one third is not sure, and 22% disagree.[10]

Religious Pluralism in France

France is a special model of religious pluralism, closely followed by many European countries. The French model of pluralism has its origins in the conflict between the state and Catholicism, embodied gradually in the autonomy of the temporal power. After the Revolution of 1798 is proclaimed a series of rights, and if in the beginning there was an antireligious reaction in some sections of the population after the revolution was attempted restoration of Catholicism, but appeared new forms of religiosity (Protestantism).

Law of 1905 establishes a pluralism opened in which the secular Republic guarantees the free exercise of religious cults, and the presence of Islam and Buddhism forms the widens pluralism of French, which in legal terms is open but is closed in a sociological point of view. Ideas from the model of French pluralism were taken by many other European countries, and the status of religious "associations" regulated in France in the early twentieth century, is still used successfully today.[11]

Pluralism and Religious Discrimination
in the XXI Century Romania

Present certain problems facing religious minorities as well as a rigid system in the recognition from the state. Regarding discrimination, a regional situation is suggestive for Romania as a whole. According to a sociological survey, conducted between June 25–July 5, 2000, on a representative sample in Covasna and Harghita, it appears that neither before 1989 nor after 1990, Romanians and Hungarians Szekler most of them have not felt discriminated on religious grounds. Thus, the question "Before 1989 happened to have nuisance through any of the following reasons?" In terms of "religious" answer "never" 88.9% of Romanian, Hungarian 90.4%. When asked "But after 1990?" Say "never" Romanian 94.1%, 97.7% Hungarians.[12]

Ecumenism—through the frequency of dialogues and inter-Christian meetings in the last sixty years, the twentieth century is called the century of ecumenism. The unity of all Christians is declared and supported desire of all the Churches and Christian confessions. However, no one could say they were outstanding and evident progress towards achieving unity. If this dilemma will be solved, it is difficult to determine, but a fact is that ecumenism acts as a form of communication between churches.[13]

2. Secularization

Since mankind talks about modernization and refurbishment, a thing has increasingly become a sure fact that humanity has entered a global society or about to globalize.

A first process that must be discussed is the internationalization (depending on the results of research and validation of their labor of people from many nations) that peaks and turns into globalization, becoming premise of security of states in the nuclear era. Mass Media and all communications media worldwide transmitted ether; global information there is an international common language (English); Electronic mail, the Internet, cancel traditional things; including

economy entered the era of globalization, this process tends to knit all aspects of human life.

Also, the pattern of secularization encompasses consciousness and behaviors of religious and political ones, at least at certain times and certain areas of the world as it is "a deeper phenomenon that affects our position in the world, knowledge and our lives and trains historic changes what compels us to account the most extensive tradition."[14]

The impact of globalization on human values and religious values[15] is the cultural relativism, the lost national identity, hurried secularization of religion and many other negative aspects. As a solution is not indicated protest against globalization, a process that forwards regardless of the barriers confronting it, but globalization should be analyzed according to the values and standards that you want printed in a society, culture, religion, etc.[16]

The concept of secularization, high degree of paradigm in the 1970s, is closely linked to the evolution of the role of religious sentiment in modern society, where analytical territory located under the influence of secularization paradigm is a scientific space formed by the ratio of modernization and religion.

From a sociological perspective, secularization[17] occurs in the early twentieth century as an inevitable process, religion inevitably finding themselves disqualified in its relations with the rationalization and modernity.

K. Marx, E. Durkheim and M. Weber, announced loss of influence and importance of religion in modern societies; for Marx, who considered religion as the opium of the people, it should disappear with the coming of the classless society and end alienation; for Durkheim, religion had to be replaced by a civil religion as a moral continuing to allow strengthening social cohesion; Weber, human progress will lead to the marginalization of religion among others. A good period of time, analyzes privileged interpretations in terms of loss, privatization and marginalization of religious sentiment and therefore (in the medium and long term) loss of faith, places of worship desolation and abandonment of religious practice community. This desecration of modern and postmodern world by transforming the sacred domain in a secular field, leans more toward

Durkheim's concept of functional differentiation which implies that the society gradually assume all functions previously performed by secular religion.

About to the notion of secularization, a characteristic is the offer pluralization on religious matters and penetration of religion in a situation of free competition in a market without rules; a situation where there is no cultural uniformity imposed by the political authority, sacred architecture, homogeneous, fragmenting into a variety of competing concepts of the world.

Some sociologists discuss the sociology of religion as a sociology of secularization, a process of transformation of believers and communities from the religious secular sphere. There are even expressions that religion is a spiritual life which will soon own "memory," sociology of religion, becomes sociology of announced a death.

For Max Weber secularization is loss of religious control on various sectors of social life, the transition from religious life to the profane, noting several areas of manifestation of secularization: the transition from sacred society to secular, implementation of activities related to the divine in secular; desecration world; religiosity's decline and the transition to a society without religion; orientation of religious groups to profane life; separation of religious ideas and institutions of other areas of social life.

Secularism, Tolerance and Globalization in Contemporary Romania

"Secularization is the consequence of freedom of the human being to the world and to its dominance over him. This requirement of freedom leads to world secularization in the sense that this world is not a world dominated and ruled by gods and masters. The world and everything in it now becomes an available thing. It is the world, the secular world."[18]

Secularization is a well–defined process in time, involving official measures and explicit manifestation of divergences between religious authority and political authority, where the state imposes its will. Secularization is a nationalization. In other words, the state or nation take over goods which until then were in another

property. The state, under its sovereignty, can secularize (retrieve, register ball) certain goods passing them on the property of the nation, socio–political institutions, declaring them cultural interests, tourism, etc.

Underlying the process of secularization is this idea of autonomy of the world which, according to Western commentators, would be the main contribution of the New Testament. The ensuing consequences are extremely important to the life and Christian mission.

"I do not believe in the power of human reason. The world before Christ believed in this autonomy; modern world, divorced from Christ, was returned to her, repeating the sin again."[19]

The great French Writer Victor Hugo said with confidently that: "Tolerance is the only flame that can light up inside a big heart."[20] From the point of view of understanding tolerance, it can be understood:

1. As a tactical maneuver to obtain some things (compromise, concession);

2. As a form of disinterest towards the interlocutor or topic addressed;

3. In respect for the contrary opinion of the other (this is the true value of tolerance given by humanists).

The term arises in the sixteenth century during religious wars between Catholics and Protestants and expressed consent of political type: to withstand abuse. The object of tolerance aroused the disapproval of society, the society admitted it for the sake of social harmony.

In Romania, the issue of tolerance is a popular tradition of tolerance indulgence, based on tolerance from one who knows the "absolute," towards one who is wrong. From the perspective of Romanian public space, there is a clear willingness to adopt legal forms of tolerance–principle, which is based on trying to define the legal category of individuals who cannot be tolerated.

There are three aspects regarding the scope, content and depth of culture of tolerance in our country: the first is a widespread desire for being right at any cost – anyone who has an opinion, thinks he has the absolute opinion; The second aspect is the pressure from

popular traditions on the content of legislation that Romania is trying for years to modernize. Thus, minorities are not only permissible but equally supported by majorities; the last aspect is about the way it is understood the principle of tolerance, as an attempt to isolate the fanatic—the name given in the sixteenth century to one who was invoking the absolute truth to dismantle civil society, the fanatic sees an offense of absolute truth.

Today, Western Europe boasted that they would have eradicated religious intolerance in countries that compose it, although at her door knocks Balkan and the Kosovo wars issues in the former European colonies in Africa (Rwanda) and now in the Middle East and Côte d'Ivoire so that religious tolerance is far from being a universal rule.[21]

3. Atheism

Atheism is the way of thinking and behavior not related to any religion or sacred, is based on denying the existence of any deity, thus rejecting, religious beliefs in the supernatural, afterlife, miracles, etc., specific theism. It is present from ancient and encouraged to continue in modern times until today. By the nineteenth century it is defined and also imagined a phenomenon of an alienated man (the philosophical sense, not the psychiatric one), and the investigator Tănase Sârbu says so: according to Marxism, human non alienations involves replacing the religious conscience with a revolutionary one.[22]

The sociology of religions is not limited to the study of communities of believers. Researching the whole society to highlight forms of manifestation and the depth of faith, the sociologist is also concerned for religiosity unbelievers, atheists, indifferentist, nonbelievers to a confession, highlighting how manifests the causes and its support, the weight and role of religion in different categories of population (by occupation, age, sex, school education etc.)

Partial Atheism only denies certain qualities of divinity, while believing in it. For example, it does not consider him powerful, especially because there are many events on earth and misfortunes

that God should not accept. Beliefs that recognize that God was the Creator, but He later abandoned His creation, and not intervene to remedy injustices anymore is also called partial atheism.

Relative Atheism refers especially to the content of faith. Does not admit the existence of God, but believe in other supernatural forces (an initial impulse, timeless moral imperative). J. Maritain called them pseudo atheist those who do not believe in God but believe in other supernatural forces; is relatively agnostic atheism, skeptic, stoic, postulator; Agnostics, on the assumption that God cannot be known, neither affirms nor denies its existence; Skeptics are non-believers discuss the existence of the sacred, but to the extent that cannot rationally be explained or demonstrated hypothesis do not adhere to hypothesis of His existence.

Contemporary neo–atheism. We are witnessing the emergence of a neo–atheism with no connection with the old dialectical materialistic atheism. This neo–atheism comes from within the community of exact sciences. He proposes, in fact, science as a new religion. Modernity is lifeless, inventing various types of "death" and "end": the man's death, the end of ideologies, the end of history, the death of God. This thinking causes anxiety among contemporary researchers, because their arguments lead us to conclude that the universe is absurd: *God is dead*.

This unease is well expressed by Steven Weinberg, he writes: "It is almost impossible for human beings not to believe that there is a special relationship between them and the universe, that life is not only the grotesque result of a succession of accidents which goes up the first three minutes and that, in a certain way, we have been conceived from the beginning . . . it is even harder to understand that this universe has evolved from initial conditions so unfamiliar that we can barely imagine, must end by an endless coldness or an infernal heat. The universe seems more understandable, the more absurd it seems."[23]

Various religions claim that morality derives from a specific commandments deities and that fear of gods is a major factor in motivating people to ethical conduct. So, atheists have often been accused of being amoral or immoral. Atheists, say the real ethical behavior derives from altruistic motivations, not from fear of

punishment or hope of reward after death. Felix Le Dantec says: "I am an atheist, as bangs, how one is blond or brunet unwittingly."[24]

Atheism over 60–70% of the population, are countries like Estonia and the Netherlands, while in contrast, we find countries such as Malta, Greece, Iceland. Romania is situated between these countries still less atheist (although had a great period of atheism forced by the communist system) together with Poland.

Regarding atheism, the great Romanian thinker Mircea Eliade expresses his opinion in a way that characterizes him: "The vast majority of those without religion are not, strictly speaking, released by religious behaviors, theologies and mythologies. They are sometimes hindered by a whole jumble magical–religious, but degraded to caricature and, therefore, difficult to recognize."[25]

4. Laicization

Much of Christianity and especially the Catholic space prefers the term secularization and not of laicization. *Laicization* is "linked to explicit tensions between different social forces (religious, cultural, political, even military) that can take the form of an open conflict. Instead, secularization would rather represent a process of progressive loss and relative social relevance of the religious, that occurs—from the powerful trends—mainly through the game of social dynamics without major confrontations between religion and politics."[26]

The state cannot it turn a layman into a believer or a believer into a secular, because target laity population who is the category of population which begins with the occasional religious and the indifferent religious reaching to atheist or those who combat the church and religion in various forms.

Secularization is the long and slow process of social life of removing the religious concerns from the population, as laymen and atheists are mentioned since antiquity; some have never been concerned about sacred (salvation, the destiny of the soul after death); others in varied circumstances, gradually became disinterested in connection with the sacred, church, religious personnel.

Samuel Huntington pointed out: "The Catholic Church has become an important factor in democratization, particularly in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Philippines, but there be an important distinction between movements animated by genuinely religious reasons and religious movements as nonreligious."[27]

Separation of religion and society is the result of a long process of differentiation and specialization of social functions, where religion plays a peripheral role. Sociologists consider that religious values do not lose importance, but people are guided by other values and the individual is no longer controlled by a system, but activates alone. Social subsystems (political, legal, economic) operates without the accord of religion as a secular progressive movement toward being avoided primarily hierarchies and religious institutions; an extension of secularization in practice.

Despite several decades of political modernization, Muslim societies face a re–Islamization and neo–fundamentalism adhering to a logic culturalism, reinvigorated by the attacks of 11 September 2001; so that we can say that there is a real incompatibility of Muslim societies to modernity, even though sociological and anthropological studies reveal even more complex situations.[28]

There is a crisis of the sacred. Behaviors have no divine laws but laws that support parliaments and governments, court prohibitions, police, secular moral permissiveness. Young ignore realities or dogma as death and salvation, are concerned about sport, choosing a life partner, forming a profession and earn money.

One aspect of secularization is the holly of layman, the way of the profane world empties the content of religious practices and rituals that were sacred until then, but keeps the forms. In fascism or communism were maintained ceremonies, traditions, hierarchies, initiations, mystical events characteristic of religion. Head deification, the party, and tightly taboo nature of the institutions hypothesis of equality and friendship, indoctrination are forms religious with an anti–religious content.

In contemporary society, secularization occurs gradually and differentiated for the different categories of people, people, areas, etc. and the churches are increasingly concerned with the "laity," trying to bring practitioners faithful to a more intense religious

practice. Secularization or laicization represent the modern and contemporary reaction of the society or individual, that permanently influence whole value system of all religions.

Conclusion

Nineteenth and twentieth centuries are characterized by a movement of secularization of societies which pass from the authority of religious institutions under the authority of the state. However, religions are proving to be more mobilizing than ideologies or science, either traditional or new religious sects.

Atheist positivism conglomerate, Marxist and antitheist provoked a modern and contemporary aggression against Christian religion and against its churches, and geopolitics already include in the category of geopolitical forces, along with geography and ethnography of new factors, pan–ideas (R. Kjellen) where religions are redoubtable geopolitical forces as it proved Catholic Church's involvement in world politics.[29]

Religion is more than a personal choice, a group problem in which the attitude of the individual religious or religious group to society in all respects and its forms and the influence itself of religion on social institutions depend largely on the spirit in which are permeated the doctrines, worship and organizing the religious group. "A comprehensive study of the effects of religion on social life of humanity and its influence on groups cohesion, on the evolution and differentiation of attitudes and social framework and the development and decline of social institutions is without a doubt able to provide results of the highest value."[30]

Social influence of the religious phenomenon, is a complex phenomenon, especially in contemporary society, which take account of certain indicators such as: the context of religious freedom, religious speech or religious language, religious affiliation, religious practice; attitudes of religious groups or religious institutions on society and on social security; the impact of specific religious groups, secret societies, societies of mysteries on the population.

One of the important aspects in the study of the influence of the religious phenomenon on society is the involvement of religion in the daily problems of life of the individual and society as it is, for example, promoting health behaviors and deterring negative practices (alcohol and tobacco, drugs other dependencies).

Due to its strong community, religion helps to shape human behavior in at least four distinct processes, religious mechanisms of social control. The first one is the involvement of religion in internalizing rules on personal lifestyles and behavior, and their violation can lead to guilt. Then, religious collectivities may form reference groups for their members. Thirdly, a breaking the standards of a religious community is sanctioned. Fourth, strong involvement in religious activities and religious groups reduces the opportunity to participate in other activities.

Along with this function of religious groups of behavior configuration their role in social integration of the individual. Supporting the activity of believers, cultivating friendship, church assisting to people with special needs, the continuous participation in religious congregations all contribute to the formation, by religion, of a prosocial behavior.

Also, another important function of religion consists in the creation and preservation of ethnic or national identity. The church was among the first institutions that promoted national ideal. National movements have found a real support in the church and religious faith. Religion can be seen as opposing the modernization of social and cultural functions: for example, the Islamic regime in Iran, but also in general, religious organizations campaigning for opposition to the values and norms of society and orientation of the whole religious, social and political life only to traditions, to old forms of organization and management.[31]

Social involvement is another way to manifest religion as a factor of change, a theory supported by the German sociologist Max Weber, seizing the role in protestant ethical spirit in capitalist development. It starts from the observation that the Industrial Revolution took place initially in Protestant countries: England, Netherlands, Germany and concluded that the Protestant ethic was the vital impulse that produced this fundamental change. The

analysis of capitalism revealed features derived from the rationality of economic and social activity. Movement of goods, capital accumulation, profit, profit from investing in production, all these are found to capitalists. After Weber, there is a direct relationship between Puritanism preached by the Protestant ethic and the capitalist's profile.

A decrease in social influence does not mean a total absence of social influence, much less a disappearance of religion, but what is clear is that under the impetus of modernity, religion's is situation deeply disturbed. In third world countries modernization has caused a social reorganization (recomposition) of the religious for restoring a crushed identity of imposing modernity as political, economic and cultural dependence. Characteristic features of modernity, namely: systematic reflexivity, functional differentiation, globalization, individualization, rationalization and pluralism, diminished social power of religion in Western societies. Instead, in third world countries, modernization has caused an increase in the social power of religion. In these countries religious mobilizations have a pronounced anti–imperialist character. Modernity has devastating effects on religious. Peter Berger has shown that religious pluralism will contribute to bureaucratization and standardization religions, which will be see exposed to consumer's preferences and will be faced with a 'market logic.' This change in the social status of religion does not mean the decline or the end.

In the words of Anthony Gidden's far from attacking a postmodern age more than ever we enter a phase of radicalization and universalization of modernity "phase that we call ultra–modern. In this phase of ultra–modernity religiosity tends to be invested as a place of remembrance at a social and individual level and as a collective and individual identities provider for holidays and rites. In ultra–modernity we talk about religious recomposing, the affective and imaginary are recreated with symbolic available in the national and religious memories.[32]

How religious faith generates a series of predispositions of behavior which can be transposed into behaviors depending on some favoring factors, then the external manifestations of religiosity as well as the identification of factors favoring the passage from faith

to religious behavior, are important aspects in analyzing religious values. Also, the religious affiliation of an individual or a society and religious practice are key factors in moral and religious value structure of an actor or company.

These current forms belonging universal religious phenomenon, need to be understood and mastered in the most correct way because from here there are derived a number of social or antisocial attitudes and behaviors; of ethnic religious political tolerance or intolerance, etc.

Religious tolerance attitudes have greatly expanded communications among states, regions, individuals with different religious affiliations. Also, globalization has broken the ethnic, social, religious barriers, bringing humanity into a "unanimous brotherhood" and imposing a particular set of values, global values. As a result, traditional values, national, regional and even individual values disappeared and will disappear, all amid a social, political, religious "ecumenism," which tends to flatten even the last form of conscience awake from the entire earth.

NOTES

[1] Jean–Paul Willaime, *Sociologia Religiilor* (Iaşi: Institutul European, 2001), 88.

[2] *Ibidem* 98.

[3] Andrei Pleşu, *Chipuri și măști ale tranziției* (Bucureşti: Editura Humanitas, 1996), 12.

[4] Grace Davie, *Religia în Marea Britanie din 1945. Credință fără apartenență* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

[5] Jean–Paul Willaime, *op. cit.* 82.

[6] Daniele Hervieu–Leger, *La religion en mouvement: le pèlerin et le converti* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999), 36.

[7] Constantin Cuciuc, *Sociopsihologia religiei* (Bucureşti: Editura Conştiinţă şi Libertate, 2006), 327.

[8] *U.S.A. Constitution* the 15th of September 1791, art. 1.

[9] Constantin Cuciuc, *op. cit.* 329.

[10] Australian National University (New Zealand's article published in the 18th of June 2009), http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.

[11] Constantin Cuciuc, *op. cit.* 333.

[12] Lucian Nastasă, Levente Salat (ed.), *Relaţiile interetnice în România*

postcomunistă. Documentele conferinţei "Modelul românesc de relaţii interetnice. Ultimii zece ani, următorii zece ani" (Bucureşti, 7–8 iulie 2000), 380.

[13] Alexandru Mesian, *O întâlnire internaţională la Roma* (Bucuresti, 2006), www.catholica.ro.

[14] Andrei Marga, *Religia în era globalizării* (Cluj–Napoca: Editura Fundaţiei pentru studii europene, 2006), 16.

[15] Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, "Aspecte ale libertăţii religioase în contextul globalizării," in *Libertate şi conştiinţă. Culegere de articole despre libertatea religioasă şi de conştiinţă,* Ştefan Mateiaş (ed.), (Cluj–Napoca: Editura Napoca Star, 2013), 49–75.

[16] Andrei Marga, *Religia în era globalizării . . .*, 28.

[17] Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, "Aspecte ale secularizării şi ale omului secularizat," *Studia Universitatis Babeş–Bolyai, Theologia Orthodoxa,* L–LI, 1 (2006), (Cluj–Napoca: Cluj University Press), 251–66.

[18] KEK, *La mission des Eglises dans une Europe sécularisée; aspects pratiques de la mission des Eglises dans une Europe en mutation* (Cahier Nr. 22, 1993), 15.

[19] Nichifor Crainic, *Nostalgia Paradisului* (Bucureşti: Editura Cugetarea, 1942), 8.

[20] *Toleranţa în societatea contemporană* (06 Iunie 2010), http://ele77na. wordpress.com.

[21] René–Samuel Sirat, *La tolérance religiouse dans les etats contemporains* http://www.asmp.fr.

[22] Tănase Sârbu, *Etică: valori şi virtuţi morale* (Iaşi: Editura Societăţii Academice „Matei Teiu Botez," 2005), 59.

[23] Alister McGrath and Joanna Collicutt McGrath, *The Dawkins Delusion?— Atheist Fundamentalism and the Denial of the Divine* (United Kingdom: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 35.

[24] Felix Le Dantec, *L'Atheisme* (Paris : Ernest Flammarion, 1919), 10.

[25] Mircea Eliade, *Sacrul şi Profanul* (Bucureşti : Editura Humanitas, 1992), 190.

[26] J. Bauberot, *Laïcité, laicisation, sécularisation* în A. Dierkens (ed.) *Pluralisme religieux et laïcité dans l'Union européene* (Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1994), 14.

[27] Peter Berger, *Secularization Falsified* (February 2008), http://www. firstthings.com.

[28] Çaglar Akgüngör, *Sécularisation, Démocratisation et Monde musulman: Processus de changement* (Colloque international 25th of November 2002), http://cemoti.revues.org.

[29] K. Haushofer, *De la geopolitique* (Paris: Fayard, 1986), 58.

[30] Joachim Wach, *Sociologia religiei* (Iaşi: Editura Polirom, 1997), 45.

[31] Mehdi Khalaji, *Iran's regime of religion* (17th of January 2012), http:// www.thefreelibrary.com.

[32] Anthony Giddens, *Sociologie* (Bucuresti: Editura Bic All, 2000), 696.

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Kierkegaard and the Knowledge of God

Valentin–Petru Teodorescu

ABSTRACT: Contrary to the common opinion that Kierkegaard is a fideist, there are in fact good proofs that he offers arguments (of an ethical and existential nature) in favor of the belief in God's existence. However, this type of philosophical justification is not classical. Evaluated through the categories of modern epistemology it may be called rather externalist than internalist. The advantage of this approach to the problem of the arguments for God's existence is its egalitarian, eliberating and formative consequences. In addition to that, a result of this view on the belief in God (and the knowledge of his attributes) is the fact that they do not seem to depend in any way by the contingent developments of science or society; therefore, they cannot be affected and eventually deteriorated by these factors.
KEY WORDS: fideism, arguments, knowledge, externalism, egalitarianism, future

The theme of this essay is the knowledge of God—more precisely the knowledge that God exists and that he is a certain kind of being—from a Kierkegaardian perspective. There is generally, regarding Kierkegaard, the public perception that he is a fideist, a person for whom belief in God has no rational grounds; from this perspective a theist, in order to adhere to his own metaphysical worldview, needs to make an irrational jump toward faith. The present article suggests that this perception is false. In what follows we shall see that in the support of theistic belief Kierkegaard brings ethical and existential arguments, relating in this way our knowledge

of God to these universal components of the human subjective experience.

1. Kierkegaard and the Subjective Knowledge

The knowledge of God has for Kierkegaard strong ties to our *subjectivity*; therefore it is important to understand how Kierkegaard understands this last concept. According to Hermann Deuser, Kierkegaard's concept of *subjectivity* was an answer to a problem raised by the idealist philosophy—which, centering on such elements as '*res cogitans*', 'transcendental apperception' and 'the unity of subject and object,' "missed—and, even more than that, positively ignored—the human being in her concrete subjectivity."[1]But what means to understand the humans in their real subjectivity? What follows offers an answer to this problem.

1.1. The Knowledge that God Exists;
the Subjective Immanent Metaphysical Knowledge

For Kierkegaard the knowledge that God exists is somehow, "built in our human consciousness"—as Marilyn Piety puts it.[2] Thus, in a well-known passage from *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, he writes:

> To demonstrate the existence [*Tilvær*] of someone who exists [*er til*] is the most shameless assault, since it is an attempt to make him ludicrous, but the trouble is that one does not even suspect this, that in dead seriousness one regards it as a godly undertaking. How could it occur to anyone to demonstrate that he exists unless one has allowed oneself to ignore him; and now one does it in an even more lunatic way by demonstrating his existence right in front of his nose.[3]

In "Philosophical Fragments" he says that this knowledge, like the truths of mathematics, is gained, in good Socratic (or platonic) fashion, through *recollection*:

> One does not have *faith* that god exists [*er til*], eternally understood, even though one assumes that the god exist. That is an improper use of language. Socrates did not have faith that the god existed. What he knew about the god he achieved through *recollection*, and for him the existence of the god was by no means something historical.[4]

Even if a person is not able to demonstrate the claim that God exists, this does not seem to deter her from the conviction that this statement corresponds to reality. For Kierkegaard real atheists do not exist.[5]

But how do we obtain this kind of knowledge (or belief) about God? Through a person's wishing to be convinced by it—says Kierkegaard. There are nevertheless some people who do not want to allow this knowledge to control their minds; this explains—at least in part—why belief in the existence of God is not shared by all people[6]. In his book *Kierkegaard's Analysis of Radical Evil*, David Roberts offers details regarding this process of obscuring and denying the knowledge of God's existence (and the duty related to it) in the Kierkegaardian writings.[7] We can now understand why knowledge about God's existence is part of subjective knowledge: it has the capacity to control the person who possesses it: in other words, it is related to the existence of the subject.

This knowledge of God is for Kierkegaard part of what he calls the *immanent metaphysical knowledge*, that kind of knowledge which is for him the subject of the Socratic *recollection*. This knowledge incorporates the *objective knowledge in a strict sense* (which referred in his view to such domains as *mathematics* and *ontology/logic*), but it is not reduced to these two areas of objective knowledge—which are indifferent to the existence of the concrete individual:[8] it also includes a *subjective* side (related to the *existence* of the individual), which incorporates the *knowledge of the existence of God*, the knowledge that *each individual has a soul*, and the knowledge that *there are eternally valid norms for human behavior*.[9]

In this sense Kierkegaard says that: "With respect to the existence of God, immortality, etc., in short, with respect to all problems of immanence, recollection applies; it exists altogether in every man, only he does not know it, but it again follows that the conception may be inadequate" (*JP,* 3606) p. 3.662 (V.B.40.) He is here in agreement with Karl Barth, who suggested—more than a century after Kierkegaard—that a conception of deity and an obligation to fulfill the moral law are the basic forms of religion, constituting, more or less, universal features of human existence.[10]

But why does Kierkegaard call this knowledge of God *immanent metaphysical knowledge*?

It is *immanent* because it is somehow part of the content of human consciousness. It is also *subjective* because it refers (and is interested) in the human existence, the own existence of the thinking subject. Because this is a "subjective knowledge proper . . . it is associated by Kierkegaard with psychological *certainty*"— writes Piety. Moreover, because all subjective knowledge is for him *prescriptive*, it follows that "the certainty of the knower that a given mental representation corresponds to reality will . . . be inexorably intertwined with his appreciation of his subjective *necessity* of the *correspondenc*e of his existence to the substance of this representation."[11] As we shall see in the next section, the knowledge that there is a God is—for example—deeply connected with the impression of a (moral) obligation related to Him.[12]

In the case of this *immanent knowledge* of *God*, Kierkegaard argues that all people have a *subjective conviction that they have a duty to God*. An individual always possesses an impression of this duty, even if he, in Piety's words, "is engaged in the activity of *obscuring* it from himself."[13] The assurance regarding God's existence is for a person proportional to the measure in which she agrees that her life should correspond to God's laws. However, *even if her life is not in agreement to God's laws*, that person might still be sure that God exists, because—though she fails to do God's will—*she might feel guilty* for her failure; if this is the case, her guilt represents in fact *an agreement* "*with the reality of this duty*" (which may in fact be "the first step down the path of the fulfillment of the duty.)[14]

2. The Knowledge That God Exists
and its Relationship with Ethics

A preliminary conclusion to what we presented until now is that for Kierkegaard "the knowledge that God exists" (the belief in God) functions more or less as a kind of *sensus divinitatis,* an apriori conviction which appears to be common to all people—although many of them might somehow obscure it, being unwilling to let it get control over their minds. The difference in recognizing or accepting the idea of God's existence is related for Kierkegaard to the way in which people *relate to their moral duty* (which seems to be *associated*—or bound—to this *belief in God.*) The present section intends to focus on this relationship.

2.1. The Belief in God for the *Ethicist* and the *Religious*:
Their Relationship with the Ethical Norms

In Kierkegaaard's view the belief in God is *not* proper *only* to what he calls the *religious stage* of existence—as one might expect. On the contrary, *the ethicist* (the person who chose to live in the ethical stage of existence—a stage in which morality has priority over all other aspects of human life) *believes in God too*. To Kierkegaard—according to Stephen Evans—was alien the idea that ethical life is "free from risky metaphysical commitments, a kind of humanistic stance that does not require belief in God...The ethicists of Kierkegaard are invariably devout and pious individuals who believe in God and participate in the life of the church. . . . Kierkegaard's ethicists *see their ethical duties as divine commandments*."[15] So, in this respect they do not differ from the religious people in what regards their belief in God (although, as we shall see, to see ethical duties as divine commandments means *not* that the ethicists will *necessary* believe in the personal God of monotheism; some of them might just say: "there ought to be a God," a reference to the idea that—for them—the *ethical imperatives have power*; and this although they might still *not yet believe in God.*[16])

The main difference between the ethicist and the religious person refers rather to their *confidence* in the *capacity of fulfilling the ethical task* given by God. The ethicists have the confidence that they can *by themselves* fulfill this task. By contrast, the religious people believe that these demands of the ethical life *cannot* be fulfilled through their own efforts. They know that there is a *gap* "*between what ethics requires and what human choice can achieve.*"[17]

Therefore, for the *ethicist* the relation with God is *not seen as individual and personal* - rather the demands of God are seen as *general rules*. In this context any duty is a duty to God. However, according to Kierkegaard, "if no more can be said than this, then it is also said that I actually have *no duty* to God."[18] By contrasts, the *religious* person is aware that she is *incapable* of being what she ought to be—through his own ethical effort. He seeks to determine "his relation to the universal [the ethical] by his relation to the absolute [God], not his relation to the absolute by his relation to the universal."[19] This person, says Evans, "has a *personal relation* to God; he takes as his model the biblical Abraham, who was justified *not by ethical deeds but by faith*, an attitude of *personal trust* in God."[20] In any case, it is important, when thinking to belief in the existence of God, to see that both the ethicist and the religious believe in God and try to respect His ethical norms.

3. *Inwardness* and Gaining the Belief in God

Belief in God is for Kierkegaard intimately bound with taking into account His ethical absolutes—and this attitude is present in both ethical and religious stages, being related to the life of subjectivity and the presence of *inwardness* into an individual. A genuine moral life starts when the individual understands that he is not totally defined by his social obligations (the Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*), but rather that he has an absolute ethical task which raises him above the social conformism. When the human being meets this ethical absolute, he meets in fact God.[21] Climacus actually seems to identify

God with the ethical (in the experience of *inwardness*),[22] at various points:

> The direct relationship with God is simply paganism, and only when the break has taken place, only then can there be a true God relationship. But this break is indeed the first act of inwardness oriented to the definition that truth is inwardness. Nature is certainly the work of God, but only the work is directly present, not God. With regard to individual human being, is this not acting like an illusive author, who nowhere sets forth his result in block letters or provides it beforehand in a preface? And why is God illusive? Precisely because he is truth and being illusive seeks to keep a person from untruth. The observer does not glide directly to the result but on his own must concern himself with finding it and thereby break the direct relation. But this break is the actual breakthrough of inwardness, an act of self-activity, the first designation of truth as inwardness.[23]

In other place—referring again to the deep relationship between the ethical and the belief in God—Kierkegaard affirms that freedom is like the lamp of Alladin: "When a person rubs it with ethical passion, God comes into existence for him."[24] (Here, observes M. Westphal, "ethics is the presupposition of religion. In the ontological order, God comes first; in the transcendental order, the ethical is prior. Together they define the domain of subjectivity.")[25]

3.1. How *Inwardness* Works:
Triggering Factors for Gaining the Belief in God

However, some commentators observed that although for Kierkegaard living in the ethical stage (for example) leads to a conviction in the existence of God, this does not mean that the people who live ethically are necessarily *aware* of this divine reality. In this respect Evans writes:

> . . . though an encounter with the ethical is an encounter with God, it is by no means always the case that the ethical individual recognizes this fact. On the contrary, a person may gain an impression of 'the infinitude of the ethical' without realizing that this involves an impression of God.[26]

M. Piety also suggests that it is possible that a person should be *uncertain of God's existence*, but in spite of that to have:

> . . . a relatively well–defined idea of what kind of behavior God, if he existed, would require of people and to feel such a *strong* obligation to conform his behavior to what he imagines would be these requirements that he would say something of the order of 'there ought to be a God', even if it turned out there was not one.[27]

However, is there not a *contradiction* between the idea that one could feel the infinitude of the ethical imperative (in other words, should live in the ethical stage) and the fact that he might not believe in God—given the previous assertion that the belief in God characterizes the ethical stage?

Our answer to this problem is that, even if this contradiction might be real, it is *not very significant* for our subject, due to the fact that the ethical stage—*if* we understand it as a sphere of existence in which we are called to obey a divine task which raises us *above the social conformism*—it is rather a *transitory* stage between the two others (aesthetic and religious), *lacking stability*.

We will better understand why this is so by looking closer to the way in which subjectivity could trigger belief in the existence of God. In what follows will be presented two different perspectives on this subject—which at the first sight might seem contradictory—but which (at a closer look) might prove to be complementary.

3.1.1. Heiko Schulz:
Existential Despair as Triggering Factor

The first perspective is that of Heiko Schulz, who suggests that for Kierkegaard belief in God represents the *pragmatic postulate* of a

person who wants to *escape* her state of *despair*. Schulz affirms that "from the perspective of someone experiencing a severe spiritual crisis God may indeed appear as a 'postulate', but not in the loose [viz. Kantian] sense in which it is ordinary taken."[28] Instead, he quotes Kierkegaard, who writes that "passion . . . assists (*that human*) in grasping God with the 'category of despair' (faith), so that the postulate, far from being the arbitrary, is in fact *necessary* defense . . . , self-defense; in this way God is not a postulate, but the existing person's postulating of God is—a necessity."[29] H. Schulz also suggests the way in which this *pragmatically* justified conversion (toward a belief in God) is related to the starting of accepting (and acting according to) certain *ethical standards*:

Now, if the purportedly desirable consequences of adopting the new worldview also call for the willingness, on the part of convert, to accept and act according to certain ethical standards of conduct—as it is the case with many religions—then he is only justified in claiming that what he pretends to have converted to *is* in fact the world-view in question, if and inasmuch as he is willing to actually comply to those standards. Finally, if we who assess his belief and conduct, subscribe to those standards ourselves, then he is equally justified in *claiming* to be justified, if only pragmatically, to subscribe and to cling to the world-view he has been converted to.[30]

At first sight, Schulz' analysis of conversion to a belief in God seems to apply only to the conversion to Christianity—because in the passage that he quotes (and on which he builds his argument), Kierkegaard writes about a grasping of God with 'the category of despair', and identifies this 'category' as being *"faith."* Or, we know that for Kierkegaard faith is the specific way through which a person is healed of despair (the despair caused by sin) and has access to the *salvific truth of Christianity* (*Religion B*)—the real knowledge of God (revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.)

However, as we have already seen previously, Kierkegaard defines the *how* of faith (the subjective truth) in this way: "*An objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness.*"[31] One might expect (given the above premises) that this definition would apply only to the Christian

truth—the belief in the paradox of the Incarnated Christ. But this is *not* the case: in this passage from *CUP* Kierkegaard refers to the *subjective truth in general* (*not* only to the specific Christian truth); moreover, he offers as *model* for this faith not an authentic Christian believer (to whom the aforementioned definition would surely apply), but a *"pagan"* thinker: Socrates (who incarnates the *immanent* religious life *A*.) About Socrates Kierkegaard says that:

> He stakes his whole life on this 'if'; he dares to die, and with the passion of the infinite he has so ordered his whole life that it might be acceptable—*if* there is immortality. Is there a better demonstration for the immortality of the soul?[32]

It is also relevant, in our opinion, that the aforementioned note on which H. Schulz builds his argumentation appears in the *same context* from *CUP* in which the above quotation it is found. Moreover, as we know, *each* transition toward a "superior stage of life" (*not only* that from religion A to religion B) is, in Kierkegaard's view, characterized by a certain despair which is 'healed' by an adherence to the new paradigm of existence. For all these reasons we find convincing the applicability of Schulz' model to the *subjective knowledge in general*.[33]

3.1.2. Roberts and Evans:
The Normativity of Ethics as a Trigger Factor

The second perspective on the way in which subjectivity could trigger belief in the existence of God belongs to Robert Roberts and Stephen Evans, who suggest that for Kierkegaard *the consciousness of the absolute normativity of ethics* (in the *ethical inwardness*) leads to a consciousness of God's existence. Evans and Roberts observe that, according to Kierkegaard, if we start from the premise that God *created* each of us in order to *become selves*, then our duty to become a self implies in the same time a *correct* relation with God. We relate correctly to God when we fulfill the duty which he gave us. In this respect, all of us receive from him the duty to actualize our ethical potentialities. Kierkegaard's ethics is for this

reason a synthesis between the Aristotelian perspective of *ethical duty understood as self-actualization*, and the Kantian perspective of *ethical obligation* (fulfilling our ethical duty *without concern for results.*)[34]

If Kierkegaard's ethics is partially influenced by Kant's ideas, it does not mean that he is—as moral philosopher—a representative of Enlightenment. On the contrary, as Alasdair MacIntyre suggested, Kierkegaard is the first thinker who realized the *failure* of Enlightenment project in its attempt of grounding ethics in human reason.[35] His solution to this problem is—according to Roberts and Evans—"not to ground ethics in an act of human will, but to seek to recover *divine authority as the basis for ethics.*"[36] To Kierkegaard the only possible explanation for the *constraining* power of the ethical *normativity* is its *origin in the divine authority*. For him—as Roberts and Evans observe—"without the sense of being accountable or responsible to *someone or something 'higher'*, ethical life lacks earnestness."[37] In this case, the converse should also be true: *if the ethical life contains earnestness, then we have the sense of being responsible to someone (or something) higher.*

It is true that the modern world has developed alternatives to this idea (of grounding the ethical on divine authority.) But Kierkegaard is of the opinion that none of them is convincing. One of these alternatives is that of founding the moral obligation *on the individual*: this is the alternative proposed by *the existentialists*. A person commits herself to a self–chosen ideal, faithfully trying to fulfill it. However, for Kierkegaard such an account "cannot do justice to the actual character of the ethical life. A freely adopted ideal cannot bind if its normativity stems from the persons' choice, for such a choice can always be undone."[38] According to him: "The deficiency in the most noble human enthusiasm is that, as merely human, in the ultimate sense *it is not powerful itself, because it has no higher power over itself.*"[39]

Kant offers another alternative: he grounds the ethical normativity in *human reason*. Kierkegaard rejects this view in a Journal's entry:

Kant was of the opinion that man is his own law (autonomy)— that is, he binds himself under the law which he himself gives

himself. Actually, in a profounder sense, this is how lawlessness or experimentation is established. This is not being rigorously earnest any more than Sancho Panza's self-administered blows to his bottom were vigorous.[40]

Here the problems suggested by Kierkegaard seem to be, first of all, that of the authority of reason. Even if reason would dictate to humans how they must behave, "*why should they care so much of being rational*?"[41] Secondly, it seemed to many philosophers that Kant's aforementioned principle is *too abstract* if it wants to tell actual humans what they should do. People who conceive who they are in different ways tend to see their obligations as different.[42] But "a moral obligation cannot come simply from how I think of myself, but rather it tells me how *should* I think about myself."[43]

A third alternative is to ground the moral obligation in *society*. In this case the moral obligation seems to be rooted in a purported made by humans social agreement. However, Kierkegaard thinks that no such view would work, because never in the history was made such an agreement:

> Should the determination of what is the law requirement perhaps be an agreement among, a common decision by, all people, to which an individual has to submit? Splendid—that is, if it is possible to find the place and fix the date for this assembling of all people . . . and if it is possible, something that is equally impossible, for all of them to agree on one thing![44]

In the contemporary philosophy, the idea of considering the divine authority as the basis for ethics was promoted by the Oxford philosopher Robert Adams. For Adams, "*God, who is a loving personal Being, is identified with the Good, a transcendent and infinite reality. . . . Moral obligations* are *identified* with the *commandments* of this loving God."[45]

Moreover, like Kierkegaard, Adams argues that his position is *superior to other alternatives* from contemporary secular philosophy—like utilitarianism, expressivism or intuitionism.[46]

Evans observes that Adams' view, like that of Climacus,

"is unlikely to be accepted by many contemporary secular philosophers." However, he appreciates that "there seems to be no reason in principle why a religiously grounded ethic cannot be put forward into contemporary ethical debates."[47]

3.1.3. Trigger Factors: Externalist and Internalist Epistemological Justification

We can now summarize these two perspectives regarding the triggering factor for the belief in God's existence, and draw some conclusions:

In the *first* perspective (of Schulz) the triggering factor is a *pragmatic postulate*. In this view, the awareness of the ethical imperatives comes *after (or with)* the postulating of the belief in God. Here *the ethical stage includes belief in God.*

In the *second* perspective (of Evans and Roberts) the triggering factor is the *ethical inwardness*. In this view the awareness of the ethical seems to come—at least in some cases—*before* the gaining of the belief in God (because it is possible for someone to gain the *impression of the infinity* of the ethical *without* a simultaneous belief in God.) Here *the ethical stage does not necessary include belief in God*, although it could include it. In any case, in this perspective (as in the first one too), the *religious stage includes a belief in God* (as we already saw the relation of the ethicist with God is rather *formal* than individual and personal one—because for him the demands of God are seen as *general rules*; his relation with God is not personal because he does not actually need God's assistance in order to fulfill his duty—in a sense, *he does not need God*; by contrast, one cannot imagine a religious person without a belief in God. The religious person knows that he is *incapable* of being what it ought to be *by his own ethical effort*: he knows that *he needs God*. For this reason, his relation with God is an attitude of *personal trust* in God, triggered by his experience of *guilt*—or eventually *gratitude.*)[48]

The second perspective, although apparently contradictory to the first one (by saying that the ethical stage includes for some people only an awareness of God's moral imperatives and not also a

belief in God)—is however, even if the above contradiction might be real, *not a very significant contradiction*. That is because the *ethical stage is*, in Kierkegaard thinking, a rather *transitional* stage from the aesthetical to the religious than a steadfast level of existence. This is because sooner or later *a sincere ethicist* will understand his *moral bankruptcy*—and if he wants to remain in this stage, he will do that only by paying the price of *living in hypocrisy.* In this case, if he is comfortable with this position, he only *seems* to live as an ethicist: in reality he lives as an esthete; hypocrisy represents an ethical stance which is *self-contradictory* for an ethical type of subjectivity.

In any case, the two aforementioned perspectives have one essential thing in common: either from *pragmatical* reasons, or from *ethical* reasons (or maybe from both pragmatical and ethical reasons), *the people arrive in the end to a belief in a personal (theistic) God*. These reasons trigger in them the subjective knowledge that God exists, and thus, through this kind of pragmatic and/or ethical recollection, they arrive to a belief in the existence of God—a knowledge which any of us seem to possess apriori, in a more or less conscious way.

In addition to that, one might observe that this process of transition from non-belief to belief in God is in both cases *rationally justified*. In the *first perspective* (the Schulzian) we have a *pragmatic type of justification*: it is rational to believe in God because this belief helps the believer in defeating despair. Of course, this pragmatic justification offers no warranty that the object of belief—God, in our case—is real (and not rather a fiction produced by our human psychological needs—a type of Freudian 'heavenly father'.) If we keep here in mind *only the individual's internal point of view*, there are few chances to have contact with a *true reality* at the end of our pragmatic reasoning. In this case, the observation that an internalist epistemology[49] is never able to offer access toward truth is fully applicable. As John Greco suggested, truth is by definition a feature external to our epistemic access—truth belongs to the externalist epistemology.[50]

On the other side, *if* God is real, and *he created us as beings capable of finding relief from their existential despair only when*

postulating his existence, then we are also *justified* in believing that our pragmatic postulate will *lead us to truth*. An *externalist* epistemology might offer o real solution in this respect, because it says, as for example Alvin Plantinga's externalist model suggest, that *a belief can be warranted if it is gained by a reliable process, according to a design plan aimed at producing true beliefs.*[51] In our case, God could have created us in such a way as to achieve belief in him by this kind of pragmatic (but also reliable) process of postulating him when seeking relief from our despair. It is true that such an externalist epistemological solution does not offer Cartesian certainty to our knowledge. Plantinga's agrees that we may sometimes think we know something when in fact we do not, and conversely, that we may sometimes know something without being able to offer (all) evidences for this knowledge (in other words, we might know something without knowing that we know it.) But that is for us just another argument for the idea that an externalist, in opposition to the internalist (who in essence remains a disciple of Descartes), "has a more robust sense of our human finitude,"[52] being in this respect adept of a more modest kind of epistemology.

In the *second perspective*, God is an *explanation* for the *awareness of the earnestness from our ethical norms*. Again, it is rational to believe in God because this belief helps us to explain *the earnestness of the ethical experience*. In this case, however, we have an *explanatory* rather than a *pragmatic* type of justification. The reasoning seems a kind of *implicit moral argument* for the existence of God—in spite of the fact that in principle Kiekegaard opposed any arguments for God's existence.

However, the explanation is *not* equivalent with a type of *positive abduction*, but rather with a kind of *Popperian hypothesis* (one which *resisted all the attempts of falsifying* it.) This is the case because, as Philip Quinn has argued, on the one side the idea of divine authority as the basis for ethics could not be (at least until now) refuted (in spite of all the efforts of the skeptic moral philosophers), though on the other side it could also find (at least not until now) any strong positive confirmation too.[53]

But it is also true that Adams observation that God's hypothesis seems to be the best explanation for the fact that the moral facts are perceived as *objective* (their validity does not depend on what the humans think about them) and *non-natural* (they cannot be stated entirely in the language of science) might suggest a certain *abductive* dimension to the moral argument for God's existence.[54]

It seems to us for this reason that this *second perspective* has *some internalist* justification—in contrast to the first one. But because, in the same Popperian vein, we cannot apriori exclude the idea that someone might find a refutation to it—and thus that its internalist confirmation *remains imperfect*—we can say that even in this case an *externalist* appeal to the hypothesis of God as the Creator of our beings remains the *best* argument for the warrant of the aforementioned belief. God might have created us in such a way that we—when realizing the infinity of the ethical in our lives—should start believing in him.

Arguments for this externalist type of warrant (for our belief in God) in Kierkegaard's writings could be seen at least in two quotations. In the first one (from his journal) this idea it is implicitly stated:

In all the usual talk that Johannes Climacus is mere subjectivity, etc., it has been completely overlooked that in addition to all his other concretions he points out in one of the last sections that the remarkable thing is that there is a How with the characteristic that when the How is scrupulously rendered the What is also given, that this is the How of faith. Right here, at its very maximum, inwardness is shown to be objectivity.[55]

In the second one (from his *Christian Discourses*), this idea it is stated explicitly:

But truly, just as little as God lets a species of fish grow in a particular lake unless the plant also grows there which is its nutriment, just so little shall God leave in ignorance of what he must believe the person who is truly concerned. . . . The thing sought is in the seeking that seeks it, faith in the concern at not having faith, love, in the concern at not loving.

> . . . The need brings with it the nutriment . . . not by itself . . .
> but by virtue of God's providence.[56]

In conclusion to what we discussed until now, we might say that according to Kierkegaard each person seems to have a kind a "sensus divinitatis" of which she becomes aware through a *recollection* mediated by *her moral experience* and/or by the *pragmatical necessity of seeking relief from her existential despair.*

Conclusion: Desirable Consequences of the Idea of "Inwardly Conditioned" Religious Knowledge

At the end of this essay we would like to present some positive consequences of the fact that religious knowledge is mediated by inwardness. Evans argued that if God existed, then this way of arriving to know him is to be expected—due to the desirable effects of this inwardly mediated path. Among these positive effects Evans enunciates these:

1. "If the knowledge of God is conditioned by inwardness, human freedom is protected." A loving God would like that human beings should obey him freely – but if the human beings would see his presence too obvious, they would be inclined to obey him just for self-protective reasons, even if they don't really like him.[57]

2. If the knowledge of God is inwardly conditioned, then the human equality will always be protected. For Kierkegaard, God is always impartial[58]. If the knowledge of God would be mediated by our intellectual acuity, or education, or possessions, etc, this principle would be violated—because in respect to all these things people are very different.

3. "If the knowledge of God is conditioned by inwardness, then the process of coming to know God will be a process in which the individual is spiritually developed."[59] In coming to know God, the individual will be more authentic and will spiritually grow.

4. "If the knowledge of God is conditioned by inwardness, then it is ensured that the person who becomes aware of God becomes (also) aware of God's true nature."[60] Only the person

who comprehends such inward passions as guilt, repentance and gratitude would be able to grasp such divine qualities as "the one who offers forgiveness," "the one who empowers the individual to make a new beginning" and "the gracious giver of every good gift." [61] In this respect Silvia Walsh observed also that for Kierkegaard:

> the way to go about forming a true conception of God is by turning inward, where one comes to know God not as an external object but 'more intimately' or personally as a transcendent subject to whom one must be related in absolute devotion or else not at all. [62]

These aforementioned consequences are another argument for the plausibility of Kierkegaard's account of religious knowledge. Moreover, if the knowledge of the existence (and of at least some attributes) of God depends on our moral experience and on our existential experience of despair—being ultimately related to God himself (who eventually made us in such a way as to react to these experiences with faith) —then the future cannot deteriorate this knowledge. We believe that, if Kierkegaard's view on this subject is true, the humans will continue to believe in God (and to have a certain knowledge of him) even in a future modeled by the present scientific, high-tech and multicultural revolution.

NOTES

[1] Hermann Deuser, "Kierkegaards Verteidigung der Kontingenz: <Daß etwas Inkommensurables in einem Menschenleben ist>," *Kierkegaardiana* 15 (1991): 104.

[2] Marilyn Piety, *Ways of Knowing: Kierkegaard's Pluralist Epistemology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 117; See also the famous quotation from Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sicknss into Death* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) 13–14, in which "the other"—who is God—is essential for the constituency of the self, in Kierkegaard's view: he is the creator of the self and its point of reference.

[3] Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 545.

⁴ Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 87.

⁵ See in this respect Piety, *Ways of Knowing*, 118 and Søren Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), 3.662. However, it is interesting that later in his *Journal* he retracts the phrase "I do not believe that God exists, but I know it"—suggesting that it is too strong; he explains that he put together these two propositions only in order to contrast them. He asserts now that "even from the Greek point of view the eternal truth, by being for an existing person, becomes an object of faith and a paradox"— adding that this kind of Greek Socratic faith is different from the Christian faith (Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 3.404.)

⁶ See again the following passage from the same paragraph from *JP* quoted in the note 15: ". . . there has never been an atheist even though certainly have been many who have been unwilling to let what they know to (that the god exists) get control of their minds. It is the same as with immortality. Suppose someone became immortal by means of another demonstrating it—would that not been infinitely ridiculous? Therefore there has never been a man who has not believed it, but there certainly have been many who have been unwilling to let the truth conquer in their souls, have been loathe to allow themselves to be convinced, for what convinces me exists, but the important thing is that I become immersed in it" (Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 3.662.)

⁷ David Roberts, *Kierkegaard's Analysis of Radical Evil* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006.)

⁸ Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 197; Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 2281.

⁹ Piety, *Ways of Knowing*, 116, 128.

¹⁰ J. A. Di Noia, "Religion and religions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 246.

¹¹ Ibid., 119.

¹² Ibid., 120.

¹³ Ibid., 121; Søren Kierkegaard, "Judge for Yourself!," in *For Self–Examination and Judge for Yourself* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 117.

¹⁴ Piety, *Ways of Knowing*, 124.

¹⁵ Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard's ethic of love* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 49.

¹⁶ Piety, *Ways of Knowing,* 120.

¹⁷ Evans, *Kierkegaard's ethic of love*, 49; John Hare, *The Moral Gap: Kantian Ethics and God's Assistance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1996.

¹⁸ Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 68.

¹⁹ Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 70.

²⁰ Evans, *Kierkegaard's ethic of love*, 50.

[21] Ibid., 88.

[22] Alastair Hannay understands *inwardness* as "a mental state involving some form of conflict", when the believer (in the inwardness of faith) "fasten on to what he wants, in spite of the uncertainty that he will get it." (Alastair Hannay, *Kierkegaard: The Arguments of the Philosophers* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 126.) On the other side Evans sees the concept of inwardness as covering a larger area than that of the specific religious faith. He equates "inwardness" with "subjectivity": here the individual develops *passions*— understood as enduring emotions that give shape and direction to his life, for goals which are eternal. In this case, *inwardness* (and subjectivity) is defined as "the affective dimension of human life that must take center stage if we are to understand human existence" (Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 19–22, 34, 35.) In Evans' case inwardness has something to do also with the ethical (not just with the religious): in inwardness the ethical ideals become part of the life of the ethicist.

[23] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 243–244.

[24] Ibid., 138.

[25] Merold Westphal, *Becoming a Self: A reading of Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1996), 105.

[26] Evans, *Kierkegaard's ethic of love*, 88.

[27] Piety, *Ways of Knowing*, 120.

[28] Heiko Schulz, "Conversion, truth and rationality," in *Conversion: Claremont Studies in the Philosophy of Religion, Conference 2011,* ed. Ingolf Dalferth et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 191.

[29] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript,* 200, note.

[30] Schulz, "Conversion, truth and rationality," 193.

[31] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript,* 203.

[32] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript,* 201; see also Westphal, *Becoming a Self,* 120–121.

[33] What is not very clear to us, however, in H. Schulz model, is the measure in which the crisis of the aesthete would necessary trigger, in the transition toward the ethical stage, a postulating of God rather than just a postulating of some platonic ethical norms (and nothing more.) However, it seems to us that the ethical stage is not a very stable stage—but rather a transitory one toward the religious stage. All ethicists will know after less or more time that they cannot fulfill their ethical duties. When they realize this, they can no more remain in the ethical stage without living in hypocrisy; but hypocrisy is a killer for subjective knowledge (and inwardness) in general.

[34] Evans, *Kierkegaard's ethic of love*, 90.

[35] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Excerpt from *After Virtue,*" in *Kierkegaard After MacIntyre: Essays on Freedom, Narrative and Virtue,* ed. by John Davenport et al. (Chicago: Carus Publishing Company, 2001), xxxv.

[36] Robert C. Roberts and Stephen Evans, "Ethics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard*, ed. by John Lippitt et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 215.

[37] Roberts and Evans, "Ethics," 216.

[38] Ibid., 216*.*

[39] Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 190.

[40] Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 188.

[41] Roberts and Evans, "Ethics," 216.

[42] Ibid., 217.

[43] Ibid., 217.

[44] Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 115.

[45] Evans, *Kierkegaard's ethic of love*, 90–91.

[46] Robert Adams, "Moral Arguments for Theistic Belief," in *God*, ed. by Timothy Robinson (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 2002), 90–112; Evans, *Kierkegaard's ethic of love*, 91.

[47] Evans, *Kierkegaard's ethic of love*, 91; Philip Quinn suggested that divine command ethics has experienced recently a revival: the supporters of this approach have successfully rejected all the objections of their opponents. However, to him this theory needs also a positive argument. He tries to offer such an argument in the local and limited field of theology (see Philip Quinn, "The recent Revival of Divine Command Ethics," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 50, Supplement (Autumn 1990): 345–365.)

[48] Stephen Evans, "Kierkegaard and Plantinga on Belief in God: Subjectivity as the Ground of Properly Basic Religious Beliefs," in Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard on Faith and the Self: Collected Essays* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 179.

[49] *Internalism* in epistemology is a view about cognitive accessibility according to which what confers warrant to a belief 'must be *accessible*, in some special way', to us. Conversely, *externalism* is the view that what confers warrant to a belief is not accessible to us, at least not in a certain measure.

[50] John Greco, "Justification Is not Internal," in *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, ed. by Mattias Steup et al. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 257–269

[51] Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 19.

[52] Stephen Evans, "Externalist Epistemology, Subjectivity, and Christian Knowledge," in Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard on Faith and the Self: Collected Essays)* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 189.

[53] Quinn, "The recent Revival of Divine Command Ethics," 345–365.

[54] Adams, "Moral Arguments for Theistic Belief," 116–140.

[55] Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 4550.

[56] Søren Kierkegaard, *Christian Discourses and The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 244–245.

[57] Evans, "Kierkegaard and Plantinga on Belief in God," 180.

[58] Westphal, *Becoming a Self* , 107, 128; Evans, "Kierkegaard and Plantinga on Belief in God," 180.

[59] Evans, "Kierkegaard and Plantinga on Belief in God," 180.

[60] Ibid., 180.

[61] Ibid., 180*.*

[62] Silvia Walsh, "Kierkegaard's Theology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard*, ed. by John Lippitt et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 295.

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The Role of Knowledge
in the Evolution of the Religious Phenomenon

Lucian Ionel Mercea

ABSTRACT: In the development of the religious phenomenon, knowledge bears an essential role. The present study analyses the factors that have contributed to the emergence and the spreading of Neo–Protestant denominations (Baptist, Adventists, Brethren and Pentecostals) within the borders of Romania in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Four different perspectives are presented: the orthodox, communist, neo–Protestant and sociological points of view. With this paper we will observe the way knowledge played an important role in the appearance and development of neo–Protestant confessions in Romania. That mainstream churches in Romanian (Orthodox, Catholic), preoccupied more with the ritualistic aspects of their liturgical services, didn't fulfill the needs of believers in search for a deeper spiritual experience. For this to occur, believers belonging to these ecclesiastical traditions have turned towards what has been labeled neo–Protestantism in Romania.
KEY WORDS: knowledge, neo–Protestant, Baptist, Adventists, Brethren, Pentecostals, orthodox.

Introduction

In the development of the religious phenomenon, knowledge bears an essential role. Changes incurred in the field of knowledge influence the religious phenomenon and its development. Those religions that do not adjust and don't keep up to the dynamics of

knowledge are meant to perish and disappear. With this paper we will observe the way knowledge played an important role in the appearance and development of neo–Protestant confessions in Romania, especially in the regions in Transylvania and Banat.

Until this moment, there is no objective and scientific study related to the causes that determined and facilitated the penetration of neo–Protestant confessions in Banat and Transylvania . Both the interwar studies and the communist ones have had a pragmatic feature, to fight against and discredit them.

The most numerous category of researchers comes from the Orthodox clergy. Thus, various books and brochures were printed, articles were published in the news of those times, the public authorities and the Romanian society being warned about the danger related to the "sects", regarding the national security and security of the Romanian religion.[1] Here are analyzed some causes that relate to the appearance and the spreading of the neo–Protestant confessions, from the perspective of the orthodox clergy, of some protestant and neo–Protestant authors, as well of some Romanian sociologists and editorialists.

1. The Protestant Reform

Unlike Moldova and the Romanian Country, the echoes of the protestant reform were more powerful in Transylvania and Banat. Under the ruling of Ioan Sigismund (1546–1571).[2] Dieta has known the Lutheranism, Calvinism and Unitarianism.[3] The presence of Anabaptists is given to us since 1527 by King Ferdinand of Austria, a devout Catholic, who complained about Hungary and Transylvania "that the Anabaptists are gaining ground."[4] One century later the Anabaptists being persecuted in Boemia and Moravia, they would have a mass retreat in Transylvania, where they founded settlements such as the one from Vințul de Jos.[5]

The first neo–Protestants from Transylvania and Banat rose from the protestants. In 1871, a German Baptist from Vienna, named Anton Novak, employee of the British Biblical Company to distribute bibles in Hungary and Transylvania has reached Salonta Mare, where

he meets, at the house of Janos Lajos, a group of Bible researching people. All of them were members of the reformed church of that locality, "but were not contented with the spiritual state of the church."[6] Eight of them will be baptized and will establish the first neo–Protestant Church in Transylvania and Banat.

Withal, the first Adventists baptized in Arad would also derive from the Protestants. In 1895 in Arad was a group of Nazarenes, converted to Adventism by a certain Tenţeşi from Braşov. The latter brings the German pastor Konradi to Arad, to baptize the first group of 15 people.[7] Subsequently, Adventism would develop more in villages where baptism was stronger, the Adventist members being recruited mostly within the former Baptists.[8]

2. The Internal Crisis of the Orthodox Church

The superstitions and the legacy of the pagan customs that the church did not eliminate completely, kept it far from the cultural novelties and the scientific progress of the last centuries. This was noticed by a series of influential people of the era.

In Transylvania Octavian Goga wrote that "some of the new priests started here, part lacking the cultural progress, part lacking the awareness of their dignity, a true business, which benefits financially from the spiritual weakness of peasants . . . such that here too, in the depressed villages, at the foot of the mountains are still found, to this day, priests making a good earning from "taking out the devils," from the "clothes ceremony," from the "black ceremony" and other several sorceries. Some go beyond and create all sorts of fantasies, meant to slave the lack of skill of the peasant. Some tin plates, painted with saints, wrapped in a dirty cover offer the "cure" meant to "treat all illnesses." Such, Easter related objects are made, that tell all the fortune and the "wheel of fortune" telling the zodiac signs and all the secrets of the future. Such crafts are endless and their ingenuity, as is ugly, is as complicated. The peasant clean at heart believes them and heavily spends on such crafts whenever trouble occurs. There are some priests whose fame reached far in

a corner of the country and tormented people from everywhere swarm around him, with money and victuals."[9]

As illiteracy went down and the Bibles printed by the British Biblical Company were spread, there discrepancies between traditions and the Bible became more and more obvious. In 1908 Octavian Goga reclaimed that "the church has had, up to about 10 years ago, a great lack of priests and schoolteachers. According to all signs—in a brief time even the weakest parishes will be occupied, where you couldn't find a man walking with a lighted lamp the whole evening."[10] The lack of clergy from the end of the 19th century facilitated the penetration of the neo–Protestant confessions in Transylvania and Banat.

The Union in 1918 brought profound changes in the Romanian society. A spirit of independence moves the peasants, the masses were pulled out of their traditional passivity, the minister of cults of those times, Octavian Goga, stated that "the questions went down to the religious belief of our villages, shaking the supreme moral factor of the crowd, either through tenebrous mystical tendencies, either through tendencies of unexpected rationalism . . . around our countryside small churches powerful attacks are given, their old walls seem to be weakened, the old Christian ideology is subject to hasty revisions."[11] The result of these assaults consists in the "extraordinary efflorescence of the sects, with tens and hundreds of thousands of followers that rose throughout the country in the late years, thanks to this moral tornado, intensified by the weakness of the church body and fueled by foreign cloudy agitation, hard to follow in their origin."[12]

To this state of affairs, the status of the superior clergy is added, which has "lost the historic significance, the inferior one fighting poverty and lack of skill, while the monasteries became dwellings for crippled and night shelters. From the top to the bottom brutal ignorance was settled, the church fully sacrificed the spiritual feature, the pulpit stayed inexistent, the cultural purpose was annihilated, holding, on behalf of the orphan settlement only the representative attributions, the ritualistic prescriptions."[13]

Another radiography of the status of the orthodox church in Transylvania is made by a clergy which underlined that the neo–

Protestant movements, under the reason of a moral supremacy, "invaded the Romanian Orthodoxism, due to the fact that they found a field favorable for the religious formalism and the lack related to evangelical living. We must acknowledge that we became stiff in form and that we abandoned the moral living."[14]

This voice is not a singular one. The same orthodox clergy supports his conclusions with the statements of other orthodox clergy: "there are voice that often and rightfully rise, that say that the sects do not represent a hazard, but our weak Christian, ecclesiastical status. To the diocesan gatherings in Cluj, the priests Sava and Antal have shown that the evil is among us, not the foreign sects undermine our church, but the sect of indifference within the church itself, our formalism and our non–evangelical living."[15]

The clergy itself had a poor image. The magazine "Our country" stated that "in the media there are findings, some of the most evil ones, regarding the paralysis that hit the clergy and the rottenness seen in the hollow body of the church organism."[16]

In the same article, Octavian Goga was quoted with the following findings: "Our church these days is controlled by a paralyzing inertia. . . . Our voiceless clergy, lacking any passion for religious truth, gave us a peasantry full of superstitions and an immoral and pagan class of intellectuals. . . . With a soul overcome with sadness, I am thinking about Christ and the church."[17] The priest Gala Galaction is also quoted here, with the following finding: "The fact that the priest Tudor left is a first victory of Protestantism and the beginning of pains. . . . We are in the eve of our confessional shipwreck."[18]

About the clergy of the Orthodox Church, Tudor Arghezi would write "the church and the clergy and in particular the clergy, which indeed, let's not vacillate, the people do not know why he should respect."[19] The bishop of Arad, Grigore Comșa seizes certain aspects meant to alienate people from orthodoxy and certain cases when "ecclesiastical persons made arrangements with the parishioners for the payment of divine services. Nothing more wrong than such an act. The priest's prestige is lost in such a case. Then, it is known that some persons, for private interests, are absent from their job for a long time, with no appropriate justification."[20]

The Orthodox Church from Ardeal was going through a major crisis, fact recognized by great personalities in the interwar period. It was written, about the status in Ardeal: "Used to watch with our eyes opened, we can see the church struggling in the way it does. We see that after a while, the priests in Ardeal are leaving it, as a ship that's stuck, saving themselves as they can on the boats of civil careers. . . . It's been a while since we are convicted that our church is about to pass through a painful crisis. It not renewed from its fundament, if it does not change its face for the better, its iconostasis threatens to fall."[21]

Tudor Arghezi is very direct in identifying the reasons why the neo–Protestant confessions appeared and spread, describing the situation as follows: "Before the prelates from the category of bourgeois enriched at the counter, obese, dull, with rich furs full of moths, the sectarian comes out lively, fiery and quick. This was not registered in the Budget, is not protected by any law, does not have a guaranteed old age, there are no whispers or rumors on his behalf. He comes in the name of a Christ meant to guide, in love with the pains of the social individual, with no sable, no car, no episcopate, no prestige, as a Christ desired by everyone. The sectarian has the relatively easy task: he always wins and focuses the sympathies of the Christians disgusted with the nouveau riche ecclesiastical organization. And the Romanian church, of our ancestors, must be protected by the police and commissaries, so that its lascivious grandeur is not broken."[22]

3. The Isolation Politics
Fought Against the Orthodox Church

After the revolution in 1848, the Hungarian government lead a wide politics to turn Romanians to Hungary, meant to diminish all that was Romanian identity. Orthodoxy was seen as a bastion of the Romanian national identity, that's why it couldn't pass untouched in this ideological conflict. This was also underlined by Grigorie Comşa, orthodox bishop of Arad, who wrote that "in the beginning, the Hungarians did not see Baptism as a good thing, but after seeing

that it spreads among Romanians, they began to support it. Even the Hungarian Baptist historian Attila Csopják admits that the government of Coloman Tisza, which hated Romanians, began to favor the Baptists. In 1892 even the Hungarian deputy Irányi Dániel spoke in the Hungarian parliament, and he said that the Baptists are good patriots."[23]

These conclusions were also fueled by the statements of several Hungarian politicians. The Hungarian deputy Almay stated, in 1913, in Hungarian newspaper in Arad: "the Romanian national matter should be untied, so that the Romanian people is freed from the direction of Romanian priests. It is of great meaning that the Romanian matter, at least part of it, may be untied aided by Baptism. Baptism may reach unbelievable conquests in the county of Arad. I think this is of great meaning, because that's how the Romanian people are freed from the direction of the fanatic priests. Baptists are tolerant and live in piece with the Hungarians."[24]

After 1918, the state was often accused that it abdicated from the spiritual primate of orthodox religion, being too permissive to the sects, granting them the right to association, propaganda, to build worship dwellings, to establish own schools, to purchase assets.[25]

Some political parties that favored the Baptists were also accused. Bishop Grigorie Comșa stated that „I would call a traitor of country and nation that Romanian minister that would dare to acknowledge the Baptists. Today they are a simple association, meant to perish and not meant to be advanced to the degree of cult."[26] The church considered itself weakened due to the state policy and thus was not able anymore to face the danger represented by sects.

4. Foreign Interference

"Sects" were classified according to their origin, in western sects (Adventist, Baptists, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, students of the Bible, Nazarenes) that got spread from Germany, U.S.A., and oriental sects (Lipovans, Inochentists, Adepts from Scapeți, Molokans) that spread in Russia and Bulgaria.[27]

Some historians highlighted the thesis that on Romanian territory no "sect weed" was developed, because it was not auspicious to sects and the inland sects was the results of foreign influences.[28] Tudor Popescu is only seen as historian founder of tudorism, and not as ideological founder himself.

The bishop Grigorie Comşa brought the most arguments for holding the theory of foreigners conspiracy, being a prolific writer on this subject. He underlined the tendency of the Hungarian nation to divide the Romanian people, showing that baptism was used as a mean to turn Romanians to Hungary,[29] stating that Hungarians were the first propagandists among the people of Ardeal.[30] Baptisms becomes so an enemy of the country, because "the country is one with the church."[31]

The same conspiratorial tendency comes out of the statement of the same bishop, which says that the "bayonet of the Hungarian virago protects the Hungarian propagandist and the Romanian can't say a thing."[32] It is noted that baptism was spread in the counties that neighbor Hungary "because Hungarian had all the interest in helping the Baptism spread amongst Romanians. In the county of Bihor there are 3600 souls, in the county of Arad 6250 souls, and in the county of Caraş–Severin 2080 Baptists."[33] In the "Universul" newspaper, the places in Transylvania and Basarabia where Baptism has penetrated were listed, highlighting the fact that this belief was spread mostly in the region where Romanians lived and very few in the Hungarian counties, the purpose being to enslave the Romanian population.[34] Another newspaper published that "the propaganda of the sects is a thousand times more dangerous than the communist propaganda."[35] Such, the foreign baptism "rushed in these Romanian territories such as grasshoppers," "fighting against national interests."[36] According to these opinions Baptists "do not incite the Hungarian people, nor the French or German one so that they leave their priests. Baptists are set on the head of us, Romanians."[37]

Even if the tendency of Hungarian authorities was obvious, to use the activity of the neo–Protestant confessions to strengthen the Hungarian element, that's not what is found in the politics of the neo–Protestant confessions. The Hungarian authorities were solely the beneficiaries of a political and religious circumstance

of that time, the neo–Protestant confessions being active in the same manner both among Hungarians, Germans and Romanians. Withal on the territory of our country several missionaries that came from countries that had no direct political interest over the Romanian population were active, missionaries from countries such as Switzerland, U.S.A., Germany, France etc.

The alarm given by the orthodox church related to the danger of neo–Protestants for the unity of the nation would have the purpose of determining the Romanian state to take the most severe measures in order to annihilate these "sects," by creating a psychosis among the population[38] towards the danger of the "sects," the bishop Comşa stating that "I would call a traitor of country and nation that Romanian minister that would dare to acknowledge the Baptists."[39]

Still foreign interference is considered the financial aid received by neo–Protestants to grant wages to those spending most of their time for the mission, for preaching and organizing. Related to this state, it was written about Baptists: "they admitted, at the Baptist congress in Arad from October 1930 that they receive money from America to pay their preachers, those who got rid of the coat and pants to wear a collar and tie and ironed pants."[40] The same author states: "it is no secret today that dollars, and other foreign money, are used to spare souls."[41]

Sometimes the external interference was due precisely to the abuses committed against neo–Protestants and consisted in information and monitoring, and in case of severe breach in interventions on a high level, diplomatically. For example, in 1924 during 3–9 December, in the U.S.A. was organized a congress of all American protestant and neo–Protestant churches, gathering 28 confessions. This congress also got care of the situation of religious minorities in the European Orient. There, underlines Grigorie Comşa "amongst others, spoke: Dr. Schᐰffer and Dr. Beatsch, who in the summer of last year were in our country and studied the situation of the religious minorities from our country."[42]

5. Analphabetism

Analphabetism was considered by most sectarians as being one of the most important causes as far as the appearance and the spread of the new religious movements are concerned. The lack of elementary religious training is present not only in the mass of simple country believers, but also among the intellectuals of the high class society. Many attributed to the Bible and faith the saying "believe, and do not research!"[43] When such individuals took contact to a connoisseur of religious teachings or of the cult they could be easily convinced to accept new teachings.[44]

According to an official statistic of the time, in 1908 from a total of 2.799.479 Romanians, who were found in Hungarian borders, 2.213.947 were analphabets. The worse situation was for the Romanians in Transylvania , followed by the ones in Banat.[45]

6. Religious Ignorance

A feature of the neo–Protestant religious movements was granting a fundamental role to the Bible, seeking that the life of belief is ruled by it.[46] Enlightenment and French revolution brought important changes in thinking and in society. The new orientation was towards a rational religion, being in conflict with the mysticism of the traditional Christian religions.

This lack of acknowledgement of the Bible itself was recognized by a list of authors that underlined the lacks of orthodox believers in knowing the Bible: "We cannot silence ot poverty in the biblical spirit. We do not have the skill of the biblical study, nor to interpret the biblical texts. We have secondary schools and universities with studies about the Bible, without the study of the Bible. The Bible was printed in several editions ,but we are not using it. In primary and secondary school religion is taught, without the Bible. Nobody consults the Bible at the faculty of Theology, except as philological manual. The church preaches without the Bible. Too much theology;

too little Bible. There is nowhere a chair of biblical lectures, of practical interpretation."[47]

While it was admitted that the Bible is the compass of spiritual life it was found that people were alienated from the teachings of this spring of universal and supernatural moral: "That's why the believer chases the springs of biblical truth, out of which he got no taste. In other words, the Romanian is not chasing the sectarians, but the spiritual flavor, that is the Bible."[48]

7. Wars and Social Crisis

The two world wars have determined a great thirst of the biblical teachings, but the church was not ready to fulfill this need, which got direction in the new religions.[49] On the ground of some people discontent and of the economic crisis, new religious beliefs were developed.[50] The ones already existent Baptists, Adventists, Evangelicals) were developed and new ones were created (Pentecostals).

The neo–Protestant confessions fructified the hard situation after the war was ended, such as: lack of housing, jobs inflation, food crisis due to drought. The army Intelligence service discovered that 20 Adventist children from Matca, county of Tecuci, were sent to be supported by the Adventists from the county of Arad. At the same time, the latter offered 50 kilograms of corn to each member of the above said confession that stayed in the county of Tecuci, being credited in the area the idea that the Adventists grant help to all those that join them.[51]

Withal, war was the place where soldiers from various places were reunited. The neo–Protestant believers spread their belief to the fighting colleagues and in front of the imminence of death several promised that they if they will get out alive, they will get baptized as well. Some, when returning from the battle, kept their word, they looked for the neo–Protestants (*repented*—as all neo–Protestants were called) and asked to be baptized. The bishop Grigore Comşa said that: "the soldiers got contact to foreigners during the war where they caught heresies."[52]

Also, the social movements generated a climate favorable to new beliefs. The same bishop noted that after the peasants movement in 1907 Adventism spread much faster.[53] The wars contributed to the awakening of many from the spiritual routine in which they were, being more sensitive to the callings and insistences of neo–Protestants. These wars lead to a climate of un-rested waiting for the end of the world. On this ground, the neo–Protestant belief became more accessible, gaining more and more ground.

It is an ascertained fact that religious movements prosper in times of crisis. World wars and economic crisis that accompanied them may be part of the explanation related to the role of external factors, which corroborated with other factors, lead to the more and more spread of neo–Protestant confessions.

8. Emigration to the United States of America

The last part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century registered an exodus of emigrants from Transylvania and Banat to the United States. Monthly, statistics shown that thousands of citizens emigrate towards the American continent. In 3rd June 1907 the newspaper "Our country" stated that "last week alone 4.049 individuals left our country."[54] Several weeks later, the same periodical would state that "last week, 2667 individuals left our country, to go to America"[55] and on the week 7–14 October another 2627 people.[56]

Not even after the Great Union, the situation from Transylvania and Banat improved. It was said that the "population of the mountains, impoverished and exploited by all, tried to leave its home and emigrate to America."[57] The Minister of Interior of the time, Octavian Goga, noted that "but the Romanian from Transylvania, the emigrant, has a particular psychology. He does not go there to be displaced definitively and become an American citizen.[58] Most of these emigrants returned to Transylvania, and once returned to the country they brought with them the new neo–Protestant beliefs that they knew and embraced abroad. That's how many of the emigrants

who left with the orthodox belief in their souls would come back baptized in neo–Protestant confessions.

This emigration process would be braked after 1924, and we find this in the same speech of Octavian Goga "we will not encourage an emigration process, that is why the past, as well as the new government have stopped the emigrations, no more passports for America are being granted. Under our government this exodus of the people from Ardeal has stopped."[59]

9. The Appealing Feature of the New Religious Sects

Neo–Protestants got noted due to the fact that some, who helped the citizens in various circumstances, fires, natural calamities, disease, poverty.[60] For example, in a radiogram deciphered, destined to the Council of Ministers, the attention was drawn towards a truck under American pavilion, with a load of 200 food boxes sent by the Bucharest Adventist Christian committee and distributed in the country to the poor Adventist believers on the 10th of October 1947.[61] Such situations found at neo–Protestants are numerous.

Another reason invoked by the pretor of Balinț in the letter n. 949/1939 to the prefect of the county of Severin is that "some inhabitants justify their passing to another confession by the fact that the priests cash exaggerated amounts when rendering services to their believers according to the dogmas, such as: baptizes, marriages, funerals and so forth."[62] The neo–Protestant confessions represented, in this respect, an attraction to those who considered the amounts cashed in by the priests on the said events too high.

Numerous authors refer to foreign help granted to neo–Protestants through missionaries from the Occident. The bishop Comşa gave concrete examples in this respect: "Baptists receive intense help from America from where three Baptist agents arrived in the country, American citizens. In the French journal *Semailles et Moisson* from October 1925, the new that the gatherings of the Swiss brothers support evangelists in Braşov and Iaşi was published."[63]

Other times, there were references to the foreign material help granted to them[64] or to the external political interventions in

favor of religious freedom for neo–Protestants. The neo–Protestant beliefs have drawn people through the simplicity of the belief.[65] This simplicity was obvious both liturgical[66] as well as in the improvement of the cult dwellings. These were usually placed in the center of the localities, close to some institutions, having on the bas-relief on the front the form of a cross.[67] Neo–Protestants preached a safer and faster way to salvation.[68]

Withal, the familiar environment of the neo–Protestant communities was considered another factor that contributed to their development. It was said that they set the grounds of small communities, where they can establish close relationships, of sharing, getting closer to each other and knowing each other, remembering the first gatherings of the primary Christian church, based on the family religious communion. [69] Another activator of the neo–Protestant confessions is represented by the religious enthusiasms manifested through a religiosity considered excessive (preaches full of pathos, joint singing, choirs, orchestra, brass band, soloist, reciter),[70] courtesy towards visitors.

To this factor, the priority to the living of the belief is added, fact underlined by various authors: "Sects make out of religion their internal world and the only world true to each believer, so that religion reaches the first plan in their thinking, feeling and goals. In any circumstance, in any issue, their belief and their religious duty overcomes everything."[71]

An appealing fact of the neo–Protestant confessions was represented by the "democratic" aspects in organizing and the practice of the cult. The neo–Protestant confessions promoted ideas so appealing related to freedom, brotherhood and equality transposing them in the religious field.[72]

The organizing structure of the neo–Protestant confessions made them more capable in fulfilling their mission and in answering the challenges. They were organized fast and spontaneously, always adjusting to changes.

Through the congregational organization there was the possibility to actively participate to the life and direction of the community. The members participated to talks, they were listened, their opinion was taken into account, their leaders were also elected

through vote and periodically assessed by the majority. This way, neo–Protestants are closer to the democratic principles and to religious pluralism.[73]

The missionary activity and canvassing were the instruments with which the neo–Protestant confessions entered in new territories. They used a rich literature, with appealing titles and subjects, such awakening interest and curiosity.

Conclusion

Most sociologists and researchers of the neo–Protestant phenomenon consider that the so called "sects" blamed so much and rejected since they appeared are both the result and the product of certain social requirements and correspond to a spiritual religious need. It is a reality that must be accepted the one that most of the churches left by the believers no longer reach their religious aspiration and the hope for redemption. This provided, religious movements are born, that through their messages re-launch hope, suggest new ideals.

In a cold, hostile world, indifferent to the inner, human needs, damaged by violence, wars, uncertainty, historical "sects" offer a new spiritual, unitary and novel direction.[74] They represent, with human reductions and imperfections, a viable alternative for those wanting a more intense, more profound religious living, opening new horizons of knowledge.

NOTES

[1] Gheorghe Modoran, *Apariția și răspândirea confesiunilor neoprotestante în România,* in "TheoRhēma" vol. 2 n. 2, (Cernica: Editura Institutului Teologic Aventist, 2007), 103.

[2] Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, *Sabatarienii în contextul vieții transilvane (sec. XVI–XIX),* Vol. I. (Cluj–Napoca: Editura Risoprint, 2014), 216–264.

[3] Alexa Popovici, *Istoria anabaptiștilor din România 1527–1768,* (Oradea: Făclia, 2009), 27.

[4] C.C. Giurescu, *Istoria Românilor*, II, Partea întâia, Vol I, (Bucureşti, 1940), 329 Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, *Sabatarienii în contextul vieții transilvane (sec. XVI–XIX),* Vol. I. (Cluj–Napoca: Editura Risoprint, 2014), 382–383.

⁵ Kirner A. Bertalan, *Baptista Kronika, (*Budapest, 1935), 110–111. Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, *Sabbatarians in the context of life in Transylvania (centuries XVI–XIX),* Vol. I. (Cluj–Napoca: Risoprint Publishing House, 2014, 2014), 542–544.

⁶ Alexa Popovici, *Istoria baptiştilor din România 1856–1989, (*Oradea: Făclia, 2007), 30.

⁷ Arhivele Consiliului National pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securităţii (A.C.N.S.A.S), Documentary Fund, file n. 16563, 2.

⁸ *Ibid*, 1.

⁹ Octavian Goga, *Vrem calea adevărului,* in "Ţara noastră," anul I, nr. 43, (Sibiu : 1907), 696–697.

¹⁰ Octavian Goga, *Din problemele noastre culturale,* in"Ţara noastră," anul II, nr. 38, (Sibiu: 1908). 276.

¹¹ Octavian Goga, *Problema religioasă,* in"Ţara noastră," anul III, nr.11, (Cluj:1922), 330.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid*, 331.

¹⁴ G.L. G.L. Botoşăneanu, *Confesiuni şi secte – studiu istorico misionar*, (Bucureşti: Tipografia Cărţilor Bisericeşti, 1929), 206.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 207.

¹⁶ Grigore Mireanu, *Criza bisericească,* in"Ţara noastră," anul V, nr. 8, (Cluj: 1924), 233.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 234.

¹⁹ Tudor Arghezi, *Epistolă către preoţi,* in "Ţara noastră," anul VII, nr.33, (Cluj:1926), 938.

²⁰ Gheorghe Comşa, *Pentru slujitorii altarului – meditaţii şi îndemnuri, (*Caransebeş: Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane, 1925), 10–11.

²¹ Grigore Mireanu, *Criza bisericească,* in "Ţara noastră," anul V, nr. 8, (Cluj: 1924), 234.

²² Tudor Arghezi, *Epistolă către preoţi,* in "Ţara noastră," anul VII, nr. 33, (Cluj:1926), 939.

²³ Grigorie Gh. Comşa, *Baptismul în România din punct de vedere istoric, naţional şi religios,* (Arad: Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane, 1927), 22.

²⁴ Aradi Közlöny, 25 December (Arad: 1913).

²⁵ Gheorghe Modoran, *Apariţia şi răspândirea confesiunilor neoprotestante în România,* in "TheoRhēma" vol. 2 n. 2, (Cernica: Editura Institutului Teologic Aventist, 2007), 116.

²⁶ Grigorie Gh. Comşa, *Baptismul în România din punct de vedere istoric, naţional şi religios,* (Arad: Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane, 1927), 72.

²⁷ Gheorghe Modoran, *Apariţia şi răspândirea confesiunilor neoprotestante în România,* in "TheoRhēma" vol. 2 n. 2, (Cernica: Editura Institutului Teologic Aventist, 2007), 116.

[28] Cornel Sârbu, *Originea şi răspândirea sectarismului, (Sibiu:* Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, 1945),35–36.

[29] Grigorie Comşa, *Noua călăuză pentru cunoaşterea şi combaterea sectelor religioase,* (Arad: Tiparul Tipografiei Diocezane, 1922), 50.

[30] Grigorie Gh. Comşa, *Baptismul în România din punct de vedere istoric, naţional şi religios,* (Arad: Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane, 1927), 14.

[31] *Ibid*, 43.

[32] *Ibid*, 15–16.

[33] Gheorghe Comşa, *Călăuza cunoaşterii şi combaterii sectelor,* (Cernica: Tipografia Bisericească, 1925), 39–40.

[34] ”Universul,” 26 februarie 1927.

[35] ”Cuvântul,” 2 aprilie 1926.

[36] Grigorie Gh. Comşa, *Baptismul în România din punct de vedere istoric, naţional şi religios,* (Arad: Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane, 1927), 40

[37] Grigorie Comşa, *Lupta baptiştilor împotriva preoţimii Române, (*Arad, Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane, 1925), 3.

[38] Gheorghe Modoran, *Apariţia şi răspândirea confesiunilor neoprotestante în România,* in ”TheoRhēma” vol. 2 n. 2, (Cernica: Editura Institutului Teologic Aventist, 2007), 110.

[39] Grigorie Gh. Comşa, *Baptismul în România din punct de vedere istoric, naţional şi religios,* (Arad: Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane, 1927), 72.

[40] Grigorie Gh. Comşa, *Cenuşa de pe capul baptiştilor*, (Arad: Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane, 1931), 4.

[41] Gheorghe Comşa, *Călăuza cunoaşterii şi combaterii sectelor,* (Cernica: Tipografia Bisericească, 1925), 7.

[42] Gheorghe Comşa, *Pentru slujitorii altarului—meditaţii şi îndemnuri,* (Caransebeş: Tiparul Tipografiei Diecezane, 1925), 7.

[43] Gheorghe Modoran, *Apariţia şi răspândirea confesiunilor neoprotestante în România,* in ”TheoRhēma” vol. 2 n. 2, (Cernica: Editura Institutului Teologic Aventist, 2007), 111.

[44] Alexandru Scvoznicov, *Psihologia sectelor religioase, (*Chişinău: Monitorul Oficial şi Imprimeriile Statului, 1939), 10.

[45] Ţara noastră, anul II, nr. 11, (Sibiu: 1908, 11.

[46] Gheorghe Modoran, *Apariţia şi răspândirea confesiunilor neoprotestante în România,* in ”TheoRhēma” vol. 2 n. 2, (Cernica: Editura Institutului Teologic Aventist, 2007), 112.

[47] Marin Ionescu, *Sectarismul, un mare pericol social,* (Bucureşti: Tipografia Carpaţi, 1941), 39.

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[50] Alexandru–Alin Spânu, ”Sectele religioase în rapoartele Serviciului de Informații ale Armatei(1947),” in Adrian Nicolae Petcu, *Partidul, Securitatea și Cultele(1945–1989), (*București: Nemira, 2005), 117.

[51] *Ibid,* 120.

[52] Gheorghe Comșa, *Călăuza cunoașterii și combaterii sectelor,* (Cernica: Tipografia Bisericească, 1925), 99.

[53] *Ibid*, 49.

[54] Țara noastră, anul I, nr. 23, (Sibiu:1907), 388.

[55] Țara noastră, anul I, nr. 26, (Sibiu:1907), 436.

[56] Țara noastră, anul I, nr. 42, (Sibiu:1907), 692.

[57] Țara noastră, anul IV, nr. 29, (Cluj: 1923), 924.

[58] *Ibid,* 294.

[59] *Ibid.*

[60] Cornel Sârbu, *Originea și răspândirea sectarismului*, (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, 1945), 31.

[61] A.P.C.M., Intelligence Special Service, file 4/1927, 4.

[62] Arhivele Naționale Direcția Județeană Timiș (A.N.D.J.T.), Prefectura Județului Severin, file 26/1939, 157.

[63] Grigorie Comșa, *Noua călăuză pentru cunoașterea și combaterea sectelor religioase,* (Arad: Tiparul Tipografiei Diocezane, 1922), 116.

[64] Alexandru Scvoznicov, *Psihologia sectelor religioase, (*Chișinău: Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, 1939), 23.

[65] A.C.N.S.A.S., Documentary fund, file 141, vol. 2, 209.

[66] Alexandru Scvoznicov, *Psihologia sectelor religioase,* (Chișinău: Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, 1939), 37.

[67] A.C.N.S.A.S, Documentary Fund, file 141, vol. 2, 206.

[68] G.L. Botoșăneanu, *Confesiuni și secte – studiu istorico misionar*, (București: Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, 1929), 6.

[69] Cornel Sârbu, *Originea și răspândirea sectarismului*, (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, 1945),28.

[70] Gheorghe Modoran, *Apariția și răspândirea confesiunilor neoprotestante în România,* in ”TheoRhēma” vol. 2 n. 2, (Cernica: Editura Institutului Teologic Aventist, 2007), 121.

[71] Pavel Nicoară, *Rătăciri pe aceeași cale falsă*, (București: Societatea pentru Răspândirea Științei și Culturii, 1960), 31.

[72] Gheorghe Modoran, *Apariția și răspândirea confesiunilor neoprotestante în România,* in ”TheoRhēma” vol. 2 n. 2, (Cernica: Editura Institutului Teologic Aventist, 2007), 125.

[73] Constantin Cuciuc, *Religii noi în România, (*București: Editura Gnosis, 1996), 55–56.

[74] Gheorghe Modoran, *Apariția și răspândirea confesiunilor neoprotestante în România,* in ”TheoRhēma” vol. 2 n. 2, (Cernica: Editura Institutului Teologic Aventist, 2007), 135.

The Establishment of the
First Metropolitan See of Wallachia

Daniel Gligore

ABSTRACT: The seat of the first Metropolitan See of Wallachia—which was canonically recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople—was established at Curtea de Argeş, alongside with the Princely seat. This ecclesiastical structure—together with the existing princely seats which were attested long before the foundation of Wallachia—demonstrate that "the [Romanian] nation was born spontaneously and naturally as a Christian nation, because conventional Christianity together with the Latin culture contributed to its formation. We are Romanians because we are Christians and we are Christians because we are Romanians."[1]
KEY WORDS: The Metropolitan See of Wallachia, Iachint, Nicolae Alexandru Basarab, Curtea de Argeş, recognition of Metropolitan See.

The recognition of the Metropolitan See of Wallachia by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople at the perseverance of Prince Nicolae Alexandru Basarab—as seen in the two thomoses of the Ecumenical Synod of May 1359—was an act of great complexity and political importance for both sides. The documents mark the establishment of the official relations between the Metropolitan See of Wallachia and the Ecumenical Patriarchate; the highest ecclesiastic authority of the Eastern Church (The Orthodox Church).[2] These documents also note the adoption of reciprocal duties, which include the dependence of the Metropolitan See

of Wallachia on Constantinople, and the inclusion of Muntenia's bishop among the members of the Synod of Constantinople.[3]

The act of recognition of the Metropolitan See is neither an embryonic act nor an act of establishment. It is the acknowledgment of a reality which existed for a long time on the territories from the North of the Danube.[4] The princes always considered the Orthodox Church—along with all its religious, cultural and social implications—to be a shield for Wallachia; a country assailed by the offensive action of the Catholic kingdoms of Hungary and Poland, which at that time, tended to justify their political expansion outside their own territories through the missionary activities conducted by the Franciscan order; the most active Catholic order of the early 14th century South–Eastern Europe. The fact that "the movement was made with the knowledge and consent of the king"[5]—that is the Byzantine Emperor; who was recognized as the protector of the Church since Saint Constantine the Great—is an obvious international act of recognition of Wallachia's independence.

In the mentality of the time, the creation of a new Metropolitan See or the canonical recognition by the Patriarchate of Constantinople was equivalent with a political consecration of a state, in whose territory the respective Metropolitan See was established or recognized.[6] Furthermore, the legal recognition of the Metropolitan See of Wallachia formalizes the Argeş hierarchical continuity as having been in existence for a long time, and strengthens the prestige of Wallachia's princes in relation with the Byzantine Empire, and with the Orthodox countries from Southeast Europe.[7]

The arrival of the prominent hierarch Iachint from Vicina to Argeş prior to year 1359, the recognition of his transfer, and the recognition of the Metropolitan See of Wallachia in the new establishment from Curtea de Argeş on May 1359, consecrates the bond between the Orthodox Church with Wallachia's princes in general, and with the founding Basarab dynasty in particular. The Church that was founded by their predecessors (Argeş I), the Church founded by the first Basarabs (Argeş II), along with the assiduity to recognize the transfer of Metropolitan Iachint from Vicina to Curtea de Argeş and the recognition of the Metropolitan See of Wallachia by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the establishment and the

material aid sent from Wallachia to Mount Athos, are clear evidence that the Wallachian princes were local and consistently held Eastern Orthodox beliefs. The fact that all the Basarabs were buried in the Orthodox Churches (Nicolae Alexandru Basarab and Basarab, in their church from Câmpulung and their successors in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Curtea de Argeş), is another incontestable piece of evidence attesting that their faith was permanently Orthodox. The *Gramata* of the Ecumenical Patriarch in 1359 addressed to Nicolae Alexandru, is another piece of evidence attesting the Orthodoxy of the Wallachian prince and his predecessors, the Basarabs, as the patriarch advises him, "to keep unchanged the teachings inherited from their parents."[8]

The seat of the first "lawful metropolitan"[9] of Wallachia was in Curtea de Argeş. Since there is no written document from the fourteenth century to attest the name of the metropolitan city, or the exact location of the first metropolitan see, the existing information as well as the historical deduction infer that the most plausible location was at Saint Nicholas Church, in Curtea de Argeş. Furthermore, all metropolitan estates making references to "the Old Document of Neagoe," were near Curtea de Argeş.[10]

As an ecclesiastical center, most historians believe that the metropolitan see was originally at Saint Nicholas Church, but it was later moved to the Monastery of Curtea de Argeş.[11] Near St. Nicholas Church there is an Orthodox chapel dedicated to San Nicoară, which served as a princely court. In addition to the aulic titulature of "Church of Argeş I" attested by the ruins uncovered under the walls of the present church, the resident bishop was attached to prince Seneslau.

At Curtea de Argeş Monastery it is certain that there was a metropolitan see during the reign of Vlad the Impaler, whose carved foundation stone was run down from scratch by prince Neagoe Basarab as he built the present Cathedral, which was more beautiful then the one before him.

The existence of a metropolitan bishop is also demonstrated by the architecture of St Nicholas Princely Church in the form of an inscribed Greek cross—a prominent Byzantine style—by its monumental sizes (one of the largest places of worship in that time

from South–Eastern Europe), as well as by being placed next to the princely court. The architectural elements of this church attest that it was built for the aulic titulature masses, where a metropolitan bishop would serve.

The fact that after the fall of Vidin (1396), the relics of Saint Filofteia were brought to Curtea de Argeş, in St Nicholas Church, is another argument that this was the metropolitan see of a church of aulic titulature in which the metropolitan bishop served frequently.

Other arguments demonstrating the establishment of the metropolitan see at Saint Nicholas Church include some old documents from Neagoe's Church; particularly those referring to a secular trial of Flămânzeşti estate, and the dispute between Neagoe's establishment and the Metropolia of Târgovişte which placed mutual claims over the estates of the metropolitan church previously built by Vlad the Impaler, upon which Prince Neagoe built his own churches.[12]

Three documents issued by Prince Peter the Youngest to the Monastery of Argeş, in 1560,[13] certify that Neagoe gave numerous gifts from other cities (Iaşi, Prăvălenii and Horn), as well as the Flămânzeşti village (for which he gave the townspeople the Sasului Part of the greater domain of Zigonenilor),[14] to Argeş Monastery during the consecration of his church (August 15, 1517), by the solemn "old document"[15] signed by the "patriarch" and "bishops."[16]

"The Old Document of Neagoe" noted by Mihai Viteazul on 11 May 1597,[17] and reproduced on 9 February, 1608,[18] stated that, through the gifts made by Neagoe "which was of the city, from above the Flămânzeşti valley (bought by late Basarab Voivode from the sons of Cotescu), the Zigonenilor Ocina [part of Zigonenilor Ocinan n. that belonged to the children of Cotescu called, according to other documents, Sasului Part na] ruled to be given by his reign to the town's people instead of the Region from Flămânzeşti."[19]

The attitude of Prince Neagoe displeased the people from Argeş due to his handling of a dispute which took place for many centuries.[20] The dispute was solved by Neagoe Basarab by offering a

compensatory estate (Sasului Part), attesting that Argeş Monastery is located on the estate of Flămânzeşti.[21]

The territories around the major cities of Wallachia, originally belonging to the prince, were freely given—shortly after the foundation of the state—either to the nobles or to the monasteries.[22] Mircea cel Mare donated some villages from around Râmnicu Vâlcea to his the monastery from Cozia. In 1419, Mihail, the son of Mircea, gives the first princely privilege to Câmpulung town. Mircea cel Mare confers privileges to Argeş townspeople, delimitating their properties and the borders of the city. [23]

If Flămânzeşti estate was given to the townspeople, totally or partially, by Mircea cel Mare, when he established the princely privileges, this means that after the reign of Mircea cel Mare, after 1418, the Metropolitan church (on whose foundations Neagoe Basarab built his church), was located two kilometres outside the Argeş city.[24] According to these historical facts, Vlad the Impaler, the successor of Mircea cel Mare, built the Metropolitan Church in the north of the Flămânzeşti estate, putting new basis and relocated the Metropolitan seat from the Church of Saint Nicholas in his newly founded church.

The document of Constantin Şerban, issued on July 28, 1654 (immediately after the ascent on the throne), certifies that the estate Flămânzeşti was "*in* the *field of the monastery*."[25] Other documents remind of the Braniştea located "*in* the *field from above the monastery*"[26] or in "*the Cerbureni field, from above the Radovan's road.*"[27] So, Flămânzeşti estate coincides with the "*monastery field*" or with the "*hearth of the monastery*" the place where Vlad the Impaler's church was built, and for which Neagoe Basarab gave in compensation Sasului Part. [28]

As in that time, the monasteries were built on certain properties, inherited or purchased[29] in order to avoid quarrels and processes, for Wallachia's Metropolitan Church it was inconceivable that those monasteries to have been built during the Metropolitan See recognition (1359), on a land given by the Prince, and then, after only 80 years, in 1439, this fact no longer to be known, and later on many trials and many quarrels to fallow for the estate of Flămânzeşti, where the cathedral of Vlad the Impaler was built.

Certainly in 1359 when the population was less numerous, if Argeş monastery would have existed, Prince Nicolae Alexander Basarab would have been strengthened it with the estate around it, and these endless lawsuits between monks and townspeople would have not taken place. So, the care that Basarab I, Nicolae Alexandru Basarab, Vladislav and the following princes had for the Church, it is an argument for the fact that the monastery could not be mingled with the townspeople. Also, if there monastery existed, any prince later, to the time of Vlad the Impaler, would not have given the estate on which there was the townspeople's monastery.

Even the name "Flămânzeşti," identical with the name of the hill from the eastern part of the Câmpulung Princely Court, indicate the origin of the settlement. Originally it was the settlement of some afflicted, of some people that came here from other places, because of hunger and other hardships, which have settled around the Princely Court, working to earn a decent living.[30]

There are similar cases in other areas where the population of craftsmen and refugee peasants settled on the prince or lord land, near the fortified princely court, benefiting from the privileges given by the prince or ruler.[31] Therefore, in the space belonging to the prince, these people coming from other parts settled themselves, later on, when the city was founded, the estate Flămânzeşti being given to the townspeople and to the Metropolitan Church. The first mention of the townspeople "argişani" is in an ancient document by Dan II, on 30 January 1431.[32]

From all these historical processes and realities we conclude that when the townspeople received the estate of Flămânzeşti (or half of its benefits) there haven't been in this space a metropolitan monastery or church, because the prince had given the full possession to the monastery. According to Pavel Chihaia, the legal situation is explained by taking into consideration the fact that the townspeople have received all or half of the estate of Flămânzeşti, the other half being given to the Metropolitan See, in order to have a way of access to the estates of that area, that had been received at the foundation: Iaşii, Prăvălenii and Cornetu, situated on the northern border of Flămânzeşti. Vlad the Impaler built up on this estate the Church of The Dormition of The Holy Mother of God.[33]

It should also be emphasized the distinction made by Neagoe Basarab himself, between the institution to which the church belonged (the Metropolitan See) and the sanctuary itself.[34]

Neagoe justifiably strengthened his church with these donations of Argeş Metropolitan Church, before moving it to Târgovişte because:

1. His church has stood on the site of the Metropolitan Church

2. It has the same dedication day – The Dormition of The Holy Mother of God—as the Metropolitan Cathedral which was replaced by the monastery. So it was changed only the religious edifice, the dedication day being the same. [35]

In one of the monastery inscriptions, Neagoe Basarab wrote that he found in Curtea de Argeş the church with the dedication day of The Dormition of The Holy Mother of God "*torn down and stiffened*"[36] continuing "*Great . . . God the Only Governor . . . God and unctuous, we pray for this new dedication day being built . . . don't let it be in desolation. . . .*"[37]

So Neagoe Basarab writings refer to the church only as a place of worship which he builds from the ground and which he gives more gifts to. The distinction between the religious institution (monastery, Metropolitan See) and the establishment which accommodates it, is clear in the documents of the time. The Postelnic Marcea donated in 1520 more goods to *The Holy Metropolies and Saint Great Church in the town of Târgovişte. . . . Holy and Great Church and Metropolitan See of Târgovişte*."[38] In the commandment of June 23, 1512 it is stated that the gifts donated for the Monastery "Corbii De Piatră" are made to "*the Holy Dedication Day and sanctuary of the Holy Mother of God. . . .* and to *the most honourable nuns.*[39] Litigations starting from the confusion made between the proper site which accommodates an institution and the institution itself (monastery, metropolia) were up to the eighteenth century.

In 1782, when Bucovina was taken away from the Austrian Empire, the Bishop of Bucovina claimed that the estates of St. George Church in Suceava, which was the second seat of the Moldovan Metropolia, were entitled to this church and not to the Mitropolity moved to Iasi.

The disputes continued, the metropolitan protested, arguing that the estates belong to the institution that "*they were given to the metropolitan chair*" and "*wherever they would move, the Metropolies, the wealth, the Metropolitan wealth must remain its, because they were given to it by its founders.*"[40]

Neagoe Basarab, after the consecration of its church founded in Curtea de Argeş, clarifying the properties of the Church from Argeş,[41] avoids the disputes over these properties between the Argeş Monastery and moved the Metropolitan See of Wallachia to Târgovişte. Instead, the Metropolitan See believes that other estates are being unfairly taken by Argeş Monastery and should be returned or given other estates instead. Even Neagoe gave Băneştii from Ruia [42] instead of Iaşi and Prăvălenii near Curtea de Argeş instead of Cornet, a hill next to Flămânzeşti, and Fleştii from Gura Baţcovului was returned to the Metropolitan See. This restitution of Neagoe Basarab is another argument that these lands belonged to Wallachia Metropolitan See which was in another place of worship. If the seat of the Metropolitan See would have been from the beginning in the space founded by Vlad the Impaler, and later on by Neagoe Basarab, the legal argument put forward by Neagoe Basarab (the continuity of the dedication day) would have been applied to these estates which have belonged both to the Metropolitan See and to the church whose foundations were used for building Neagoe's church, and it would have won. Not being this situation, Neagoe had to give other estates or return to the Metropolitan See what it belonged to the Metropolitan See.[43]

Thus, in the Metropolitan city Curtea de Argeş, two Metropolitan seats have existed, the Metropolia having later on a third seat in Târgovişte.

The first Metropolitan seat had the estates near Curtea de Argeş, these estates being donated, as it is normal, by Nicolae Alexandru Basarab himself, who dealt particularly with his father, Basarab I, both with the building of Saint Nicholas Church in Curtea de Argeş and the recognition of Wallachia Metropolitan See and of Iachint. These estates claimed by the people of the new metropolitan church in Târgovişte, when the Metropolitan seat was moved from

Curtea de Argeş, were won and for them Neagoe either returned others, or he retrocede them, as in the case of Fleştii.

The second Metropolitan seat, with the dedication day of The Dormition of The Holy Mother of God, on whose bases Neagoe Basarb built the Argeş Monastery, had estates around Râmnic and at Măniceşti. These estates were kept by the monastery, without any problem after moving the Metropolitan See to Târgovişte.

The third metropolitan seat was at the Church the Ascension of the Lord, in Târgovişte. This Metropolitan seat being recently moved here, claimed and won only the estates of the first Metropolitan seat from Curtea de Argeş.[44]

The areas where there were given the gifts are another argument for the metropolitan seats. Thus, "*Fleştii from Gura Baţcovului with all the land and the two mills,*" located near Piteşti which were taken from Argeş Monastery and given to the Metropolitan See of Târgovişte, were probably donated by Mircea cel Mare to the metropolitan church. The statement is strengthened by another donation of Mircea cel Mare, around the area of Piteşti too,[45] from 20 May 1388, made to his church from Cozia: *I have given a mill in the area of Piteşti . . . and a mill at Râmnic which was given by Prince Dan.*[46] So, Mircea cel Mare donated to the Metropolitan See and to his churches, estates from the area of Piteşti.

The estates of the second Metropolitan seat, taken by the Argeş Monastery after moving the Metropolitan See to Târgovişte, were received after Mircea cel Mare. So they were given by Vlad the Impaler to his new metropolitan church on whose foundations Neagoe Basarab would build the beautiful monastery. These estates are bordered by other estates donated by Vlad the Impaler to other monasteries. The estate from Seoaşu,[47] mentioned in Neagoe "Old Document," and in a document dated from 15 April 1498, was neighbouring the vineyard of Govora Monastery from Copăcel. The latter was given by the Prince Vlad the Impaler.[48] Moreover, in the vicinity of the Şeoaşu estate from the Argeş Metropolitan See, in the late fifteenth century, it was bought for the Govora Monastery the vineyard "popii Alexe from Argeş."[49] Other estates of various priests were "near the bishop's land"[50] of the Metropolitan See. So, these estates from the area, donated either to the Metropolitan See or to

other monasteries founded by Vlad the Impaler, belonged to the prince. It is an indication that the founder of the new metropolitan cathedral endowed his church with estates that will remain in the property of the church founded by Neagoe, which kept the place and their patron, under the legal argument put forward by Neagoe Basarab – continuing the dedication day.

Neagoe Basarab, in order to leave instead of the Argeş Metropolitan See a saint sanctuary worthy of remembrance, founded the Argeş Monastery, sparing no effort for his church to be "*an occasion of wonder . . . and it is peerless between the monasteries from this country*" (Paul Aleppo); "*The first in Romania*" (Alexander Pelimon); "*A real Wallachian Saint Sophia*" (W. Derblich) and "*to include everything in one word, this church is a jewel*" (Paul of Aleppo).

The council held at Curtea de Argeş, after the consecration of the church he founded, at which hierarchs of the Orthodox Churches in the world attended, the gifts made to all the Holy Shrines in the country and throughout the Orthodox world as well as *His teachings*,[51] all these prove his Orthodox belief,[52] the care for ruling the true believer people and his authority at an international level. Neagoe Basarab can be considered the one who introduced the pomposity of the aulic titulature in Wallachia, requirement shown in the listed above, but also in the clothing worn in the votive portrait from Argeş Monastery. The prince has a lilac cape, embroidered with golden thread, crisscrossed by wide, embroidered strips in front, on shoulders and on the bottom. [53] In the lower right side, it has embroidered the double–headed eagle, the old Asian mark, taken by the Paleologos princes, gradually becoming the tyrants symbol (this title was conferred, from the second half of the twelfth century, to sons, brothers and emperor's sons–in–law, and from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to the Serbian sovereigns). The double–headed eagle clock was worn by the Byzantine emperors, Serbian despots and Mircea cel Mare, as shown in his monastery from Cozia.[54]

The ceremonial robe, similar to that of the Byzantines despots (Neagoe was married with Despina Milita, from the Porfirogenet family) with elements of the despots of sebastocrats, is their own

creation and it is a symbol of their aulic authority for the others around.[55] Neagoe and his son Theodosius, wear the most precious ceremonial robe, symbolic for the investiture of the king alongside the crown, called granatza.[56] It was the privilege of the Byzantine emperors, later on being taken by the Serbian princes as well. In Wallachia granatza wasn't used,[57] which highlights Neagoe's desire of being the follower of the Byzantine and Serbian leaders. The crown, the emblem of the monarchical power, worn by the Romanian rulers, starting with the fourteenth century, was open, similar to that worn by the Western sovereigns, with three jewels in front. Neagoe's Crown, a new type, has five jewels and is lavishly decorated with pearls and precious stones. [58]

For the existence of the Argeş Monastery for before Vlad the Impaler, who built it between 1437–1439 and re-consecrated it on August 15, 1439, in order to be a metropolitan cathedral, there are some arguments during his reign or ulterior to the reign of Saint Neagoe Basarab.

An argument is the diptych of the monastery which begins with Basarab the founder, Nicolae Alexandru Basarab. Regarding the diptych, it should be noted that it is from the time of Neagoe Basarab.[59]

Another possible argument is the painting of Nicolae Alexandru Basarab in the monastery. And here it should be mentioned that the present painting is late, after the restoration made during the rule of King Carol I, and it reproduces the painting made by Dobromir of Târgovişte, in 1526, made on the expense of Prince Radu of Afumaţi,[60] Neagoe Basarab's son–in–law.

The fact that Negru Vodă Monastery from Câmpulung Muşcel was originally a princely church, having this status until the time of Matei Basarab, who turned it into a convent,[61] is another argument that the Metropolitan seat was in Curtea de Argeş, where there may be a monastery and the monastic people, even mentioned in the synodal document of May 1359: "*all the clergy in that country and other holy monks or laymen, to obey and submit to him as a true shepherd for them, and their parent and teacher*.[62]

NOTES

[1] Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. I, ed. I, (București: Editura Institutului Biblic si de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1980)*,* 69.

[2] Dinu C. Giurescu, *Ţara Românească în secolele XIV–XV,* (București: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1973), 353.

[3] Nicolae Dobrescu, *Întemeierea mitropoliilor şi a celor dintâi mănăstiri din ţară,* (București: Tipografia Cărţilor Bisericeşti, 1906), 39–49.

[4] Constantin C. Giurescu, „Întemeierea Mitropoliei Ungrovlahiei," *Biserica Ortodoxă Română,* 7–10, (1959), 678.

[5] *Fontes Historiae Daco–Romanae / Izvoarele istoriei românilor*, vol. IV, *Scriitori şi acte bizantine sec. IV–XV*, (*Fontes*, IV) publ. by Haralambie Mihăescu, Radu Lăzărescu, Nicolae–Şerban Tanaşoca, Tudor Teoteoi, București: Editura Academiei, 1982), 201–03.

[6] C. Marinescu, „Înfiinţarea Mitropoliilor în Ţara Românească şi în Moldova," *Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secţiunii Istorice (A.R.M.S.I.)*, seria a III–a, tomul II, mom. 6, (București: Editura Academiei, 1924), 248.

[7] Radu Ştefan Vergatti, „Mitropolia Ţării Româneşti sau a Ungrovlahiei." In *Domnitorii şi ierarhii Ţării Româneşti, Ctitoriile şi mormintele lor,* (București: Editura Cuvântul Vieţii a Mitropoliei Munteniei şi Dobrogei, 2009), 481.

[8] *Documente privind Istoria românilor (D.I.R.), B Ţara Românească,* vol. I, *veac XIII–XV, (1247–1500),* (București: Editura Academiei, 1953), 14–6.

[9] *Documente privind Istoria românilor (D.I.R.), B Ţara Românească,* vol. I, *veac XIII–XV, (1247–1500),* (București: Editura Academiei, 1953),13–4.

[10] Pavel Chihaia, *Din cetăţile de scaun ale Ţării Româneşti*, (București: Editura Meridiane, 1974), 46–66.

[11] Radu Ştefan Vergatti, „Mitropolia Ţării Româneşti sau a Ungrovlahiei," in *loc. cit.,* 478.

[12] Pavel Chihaia, „Cele două locaşuri ale Mitropoliei din Curtea de Argeş, deduse din hrisoavele bisericii lui Neagoe Basarab," *Mitropolia Olteniei*, 7–8, XIX (1967), 599.

[13] *Documente privind Istoria românilor (D.I.R.), B sec. XVI, vol. III, no. 146,* 121; no. 158, 132, no. 159, 133.

[14] Pavel Chihaia, *Din cetăţile de scaun ale Ţării Româneşti, ed. cit.,* 48.

[15] „Svitoc" is an official paper roll shaped.

[16] It is about the Patriarch of Constantinople Teolipt and about the five metropolitans who committed the consecration of the church founded by Neagoe, said Gavriil Protea in *the Life of St Niphon.*

[17] The Old Document of Mihai Viteazul states that a number of gifts strengthened by this voivode "were given by the late Neagoe BAsarab Holy Monasteries . . . and is written in the Old Document of Neagoe Basarab. Şi am văzut şi domnia mea svitocul pe care la făcut domnia lui de miluire." *DIR, B* ., XVI, VI, nr. And I also saw my reign, the Old Document made by his reign of mercy." *Documente privind Istoria românilor (D.I.R.),B*., XVI, VI, no. 282, 265.

[18] The document records that Radu Şerban "the nephew of the late voivode Basarab . . . seeing the venerable "Old Document " of the lord's grandfather, Prince Basarab I, old and dark . . . I renewed and I strengthened with the charter of my reigh." *Documente privind Istoria românilor (D.I.R.),B.,* XVII, I no. 273, p. 293–296. 273, 293–96. Radu Şerban a înlocuit „svitocul" lui Neagoe cu alt hrisov cu acelaşi conţinut care se păstrează. Radu Serban replaced Neagoe basarab`s "Old Document " with another "Old Document " with the same content which is preserved. Realitatea este confirmată şi de faptul că pasaje întregi din hrisovul lui Radu Şerban sunt identice cu una din pisaniile lui Neagoe Basarab de pe ctitoria sa argeşeană. The reality is confirmed also by the fact that the many passages of the "Old Document " of Radu Serban are identical to one of Neagoe Basarab`s inscriptions from its foundation from Arges area. Pavel Chihaia, „Cele două locaşuri ale Mitropoliei din Curtea de Argeş, deduse din hrisoavele bisericii lui Neagoe Basarab," în *loc.* Pavel Chihaia, " The two seats of Curtea de Arges Mitropoly, inferred from the church "Old Documents " of Neagoe Basarab," in *loc. cit.*, 600.

[19] *Documente privind Istoria românilor (D.I.R.), B.*, XVII, I, no. 273, 293–96.

[20] *Ibidem.*

[21] Ion Ionaşcu, „Din relaţiile mănăstirii Curtea de Argeş cu orăşenii argeşeni," *Revista istorică română*, XIV (1944), fasc. 4, 458.

[22] Ion Donat, „Le domaine princier rural en Valachie (XIVᵉ–XVIᵉ siècles," *Revue Roumaine d`Histoire*, tome VI, 1967 (2), 227–29.

[23] Pavel Chihaia, „Cele două locaşuri ale Mitropoliei din Curtea de Argeş, deduse din hrisoavele bisericii lui Neagoe Basarab," in *loc. cit.,* 604–05; Pavel Chihaia, *Din cetăţile de scaun ale Ţării Româneşti*, *ed. cit.,* 57.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] The Document of Constantin Şerban is in *Serviciul Municipiului Bucureşti al Arhivelor Naţionale (S.M.B.A.N.),* Fond. Episcopia Argeş, Orig. LXIX bis/14.

[26] D.I.R., XVI, B, II, nr. 132, p. 130; no. 49, 46.

[27] According to the documents from 17 july 1721 kept in *Serviciul Municipiului Bucureşti al Arhivelor Naţionale (S.M.B.A.N.)*, Fond Episcopia Argeş, Mss. 168, f. 56 and from 26 January 1811 păstrat în *Serviciul Municipiului Bucureşti al Arhivelor Naţionale (S.M.B.A.N.),* Fond Episcopia Argeş, Mss. 168, f. 59.

[28] Pavel Chihaia, *Din cetăţile de scaun ale Ţării Româneşti*, *ed. cit.,* 54.

[29] Ion Donat, *Le domaine princier rural en Valachie (XIVᵉ–XVIᵉ siècles), ed. cit.*, 215.

[30] Pavel Chihaia, *Din cetăţile de scaun ale Ţării Româneşti*, *ed. cit.,* 55–6.

[31] P. P. Panaitescu, „Oraşe din Moldova," *Magazin Istoric,* 9, III (1969), 15.

[32] *Documenta Romaniae Historica, seria B, Ţara Românească (D.R.H.) ser. B, Ţara Românească,* vol. I, *(1247–1500)*, I, no. 69, 130–31.

[33] Pavel Chihaia, *Din cetăţile de scaun ale Ţării Româneşti*, *ed. cit.,*55.

[34] *Ibidem.*

[35] *Ibidem,* 57.

[36] „Neîntărită" meaning without complete documentation.

[37] Gheorghe Mihăilă, Dan Zamfirescu, *Literatura română veche (1402–1647)*, vol. I, (Bucureşti: Editura Tineretului, 1969), 160.

[38] *Documente privind Istoria românilor (D.I.R.), B. Ţara Românească*, XVI, B, I, no. 159, 161.

[39] *Ibidem*, no. 78, p. 77.

[40] Constantin Erbiceanu, *Istoria Mitropoliei Moldovei, Sucevei şi a Catedralei Mitropolitane din Iaşi,* (Bucureşti, Tipografia Cărţilor Bisericeşti, 1888), 300.

[41] These proprieties are: Seoaşul near Ocnele Mari, Bârseştii, Ruda near Olt an Măniceştii, on their way to Curtea de Argeş and Piteşti. Pavel Chihaia, *Din cetăţile de scaun ale Ţării Româneşti*, *ed. cit.,*58.

[42] *Documente privind Istoria românilor (D.I.R.),* XVI, B, II, no. 125, 123–24; *Documente privind Istoria românilor (D.I.R.),* XVI, B, III, no. 199, 165–66.

[43] Pavel Chihaia, *Din cetăţile de scaun ale Ţării Româneşti*, *ed. cit.,* 58.

[44] *Ibidem,* 59.

[45] Dinu C. Giurescu, *Ţara Românească în secolele XIV–XV, ed. cit.,*98.

[46] *Documenta Romaniae Historica (D.R.H.),Ţara Românească,* B, I, no. 9, 23–8.

[47] Situated near Ocnele Mari.

[48] *Documenta Romaniae Historica (D.R.H.),Ţara Românească,* B, I, no. 263, 460–61; *D.I.R.*, XVI, B, I, no. 9, 15–7.

[49] *Documenta Romaniae Historica (D.R.H.),Ţara Românească,* B, I, no. 220, 351–55; *D.I.R.*, XVI, B, I, no. 9, p. 16, no. 129,128.

[50] *Documenta Romaniae Historica (D.R.H.),Ţara Românească,* B. no. 15, 43–8; *D.R.H.*, B, I, no. 303, 495–96.

[51] Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, "Aspecte privitoare la *Învăţăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul sau Theodosie," Păstorul ortodox,* (Curtea de Argeş: Editura Arhiepiscopiei Argeşului şi Muscelului, 2012), 12–41.

[52] The care of St. Neagoe Basarab for knowing and confessing the Orthodox faith was a permanent priority. The prince was a fine theologian able to have correspondence on theological themes with the great scholars of the time. To be clear on the differences between Catholicism and Orthodox faith, Neagoe consulted Manuel of Corinth (approx. 1460–1551)—the famous theologian of that time, professor at the Patriarchate School and high ritor at the Ecumenical Patriarchate—who sent him letter listing the main errors of the Latins: the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son as well (Filioque), the confusion of the Being with the divine energy, use of azyme at Communion, formulas and gestures wrongly made during the service of Baptism and other Sacraments, the laxist way in which priesthood is conceived and practiced, the belief in the Purgatory, different perpetuation of the Cross sign, etc. The letter to Neagoe Basarab is preserved today between the Greek manuscripts of the University of Illinois Library. A photocopy of the manuscript was brought in the country by Professor dr. Dan Zamfirescu and has been translated by Nicolae Serban Tanaşoca in the magazine *Tabor*. Nicolae Serban Tanaşoca, "The letter of the great ritor of the

Ecumenical Patriarchate, Manuel from Corinth to Neagoe Basarab" in *Tabor*, Romanian culture and spirituality magazine published by the Metropolitan of Cluj, Alba, Crisana and Maramures, Year V, nr. 8 November 2011, 5–11.

[53] P. P. Panaitescu, „L`aigle byzantine sur les vétements des princes roumains du Moyen Age," *Academie Roumaine. Bulletin de la séction historique*, XII (1930), 64–7.

[54] Răzvan Theodorescu, „Despre un însemn sculptat şi pictat de la Cozia (în jurul „despotiei" lui Mircea cel Bătrân"), *Studii şi Cercetări de Istoria Artei*, seria Artă Plastică, tom 16, 2 (1969), 194.

[55] Radu Ştefan Vergatti, *Neagoe Basarab. Viaţa, opera, domnia,* Ediţia a II–a revăzută şi adăugită, (Curtea de Argeş: Editura Episcopiei Argeşului şi Muscelului, 2009), 80–1.

[56] Corina Nicolescu, *Istoria costumului de curte în ţările române, secolele XIV–XVIII*, (Bucureşti: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1970),123.

[57] *Ibid.,*127.

[58] Corina Nicolescu, „Les insignes du pouvoir—Contribution à l`histoire du cérémonial de cour roumain," *Revue des Études Sud–Est Européennes*, XV (1977) 2, 241–42.

[59] Aurelian Sacerdoţeanu, „Pomelnicul Mănăstirii Argeşului," *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, LXXXIII (1965) 3–4, 297–330; *Serviciul Municipiului Bucureşti al Arhivelor Naţionale (S.M.B.A.N.),* Fond Episcopia Argeş, Condica, no. 742, f. 1.

[60] Buried in the Cathedral of Curtea de Arges. Nicolae Iorga, *Inscripţii din Bisericile României*, vol. I, (Bucureşti: Institutul de Arte Grafice Minerva, 1905), 148–49.

[61] The prince, in the Old Document given to the monastery on 10 April 1647 says "I did`t left for haggling what it was first, namely to be a parish church, which it was made into a monastic house." *Serviciul Municipiului Bucureşti al Arhivelor Naţionale (S.M.B.A.N.),* Fond Mănăstirea Câmpulung, Mss. 204, f. 76–80; Pr. I. Răuţescu, *Câmpulung Muscel. Monografie istorică,* (Câmpulung: Tipografia Gh. Gh. Vlădescu, 1943), 78.

[62] *Documente privind Istoria românilor (D.I.R.), B,* I*,* 13–4.

Expectations and Christian Perspectives Regarding the Future

Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru

ABSTRACT: Christianity regards the future in the sense that the future events will have the vocation of eradicating the evil for good, ending the fight between good and bad and eliminating the source of evil once and for all. In this study[1], looking from this Christian perspective regarding the future, a person who embraces the Christian values, no matter the present difficulties, will go further with stoicism and with faith, convinced that future will bring the complete solution to everything. Regarding the knowledge, a Christian considers that during his lifetime he knows the things only partially, but, along with the coming of Jesus Christ, he could reach the full understanding of things, fact which will determine him to move on in life facing any vicissitude with faith, waiting for the accomplishment of all the divine promises.
KEY WORDS: Christian perspective, problems, provocations, expectations.

A Christian Perspective on the Way of Approaching the Present or Future Life Problems

Authentic Christianity is not an approach of the temporal existence and of its elements, but instead, it is the understanding of the stagnant things of God, starting from the unstable ones from the earth. The beautiful Christianity is not the annihilation of the temporal life from earth in favor of the one from the sky, but it is the

exemplification through the passing life, that there is an eternal life which we should appreciate more, doing a lesson from it.[2]

When everything becomes uneasy and it is on the rack of the sea of our life, foamed sea and often flagellated by the numerous winds of temptation and sin, when the ship of our life is being hit and ready to sink, when we are veiled by the black night of the lack of faith, when we are dealing with the instability of our working place or with financial crisis, when we have family or health problems, when around us we hear only cries for help, in different instances, we would have to say, each of us, "Where could my help come from?" It is not easy to be alone, to face every challenge, to come to be exhausted, without powers and resources, to cry loud and not be heard, and after you have tried and finished all the means and the resources of your competencies, to be able to ask yourself and to call out through faith exclusively: "Where could my help come from?"

When you fought and struggled, when you didn't find an escape, and when you didn't know where the escape is, where the solution to all your problems is, then call out for God, Your Creator, and believe with all your heart that the help will definitely come from Him, and only from Him. It is not God's will for His sons to be taken down by the burden of the life's concerns.[3] What is mother's sweet word for her child and what is the child's word for his mother, what is the path for the lost being, what is light for the one who walks on dark during night and throughout dangerous places, that is God's intervention for the faithful human being, who has faith in God and comes with faith with any problem, regardless of its nature, to Him, acknowledging his sins and wanting to receive the divine liberation and support in the expressed needs.

The Christian's life has sense and value only if it is an important preoccupation for his own redemption, and the real acquisition of this by real commitment with Jesus Christ the Savior. In this way the Christian's life on earth is not manifested like a simple biological existence, but as a spiritual experience specific to human beings, with finality about his quality of spiritual being in the body, possessing reason, sensibility and free will, creativity and carrying material and spiritual values.[4]

A Christian will always be aware, both in the present and in the future too, by the fact that God is ready to listen to our problems, and intervene for us as humans with His help. The problems the human being is dealing with in the present, but which will carry on in the future too, are found in all the parts of our life. In this way, for the present and for the future too, there are still problems from the family life, from social and economic life, or from other domains, problems which we search and will search solutions for. For an authentic Christian neither the present nor the future will carry on the concern for him, because he tackles the problems through faith and with full trust in his Creator. For such a human being, the present and the future won't be sources of anxiety. Even though he doesn't know the future, a believer puts his life with all the problems in the hand of The One that has the restrains of all there is on earth. We list some of the present and future issues, challenges in which the human being expects help from The One that has all the power:

Problems and Expectations in Family Life

The Creator said even from the beginning that "*it is not good for the human being to be alone, to do a proper help for him*" (Genesis 2, 18). In the Paradise Garden, Adam, the human created by God, above all, the inferior beings, had everything he needed on hand. He had at discretion all sorts of aromatic and ripened fruits; he enjoyed all the natural beauties of the garden and breathes the wonderful smell of flowers. All types of animals that were playing in front of him and the abundance of birds which sang wonderfully in the garden's trees, kept the boring away from Adam. Besides all these, the celestial emissaries, God's angels and even God the Father, came daily to visit, offering to the new created human being, that atmosphere of a wonderful collective, superb, of an apart and special relationship.[5] Beside all these, did he need something else? The Creator tells Adam that he will give him a proper help. *"And God said: 'It is not good for human being to be alone; let's create him a proper help.'"*[6] The human being was not created by God to live in loneliness, but he has to be a sociable being, that is why God decided to create for him a life partner

similar to his nature. This fact should determine the married ones, and especially the men, not to forget that their life partners, their wives, were given to them by God to be their help. God made us to be the help of one another, but today, in the conditions of sin, we can become not only helpers, but obstacles for the others.

There are today couples who do not love each other anymore, who don't have a relationship, who only talk the daily problems, because they have lost the daily communion with God, through praying and the study of the Holy Book. They cannot find time for all these and for discussing one with another, from heart to heart. But God's prophesy was that the Elijah of our times will turn the heart of the parents towards children and the children's heart towards their parents.[7] Here there is the key to solving the family problems.[8] Even though obstacles, troubles, and demoralizations can come on the way, the wife should not bear the thought that their union is a mistake or a disappointment. Make the decision of being everything it is possible to be one for each other. Continue with the first intentions. Embrace in each possible way in order to fight against the battles of life. Take time to search how you could broaden the other's happiness. Be indulgent with the other. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be only a weak start of it. The warmth of the real friendship, love which bonds heart with heart, is a pre-tasting of the sky's joys."[9]

Nowadays there is a prophesy that in the near future there is a necessity of reformation and pre-figuration through the work of the Prophet Elijah, in order to light or keep the sacred fire in the family, an institution created and blessed by the Creator. On this aspect there are eloquent the advice of an American writer:

Parents Should Give Children Right Direction—With us as parents and as Christians it rests to give our children right direction. They are to be carefully, wisely, tenderly guided into paths of Christ–like ministry. We are under sacred covenant with God to rear our children for His service. To surround them with such influences as shall lead them to choose a life of service, and to give them the training needed, is our first duty. Children May Be Daniels and Esthers Today—God's purpose for

the children growing up beside our hearths is wider, deeper, and higher, than our restricted vision has comprehended. From the humblest lot those whom He has seen faithful have in time past been called to witness for Him in the world's highest places. And many a lad of today, growing up as did Daniel in his Judean home, studying God's word and His works, and learning the lessons of faithful service, will yet stand in legislative assemblies, in halls of justice, or in royal courts as a witness for the King of kings. Multitudes will be called to a wider ministry. The whole world is opening to the gospel. . . . From every quarter of this world of ours comes the cry of sin–stricken hearts for knowledge of the God of love. . . . It rests with us who have received the knowledge, with our children to whom we may impart it, to answer their cry. To every household and every school, to every parent, teacher, and child upon whom has shone the light of the gospel, comes at this crisis the question put to Esther the queen at that momentous crisis in Israel's history, "Who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"[10]

Economical Problems

The Holy Scripture describes the fact that Israel's children carried on many troubles because of the slavery from Egypt, and called out to God calls of despair: *"And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them."[11]* If you have today, or you will have in the future problems connected with earning your every day bread, if you fill a burden from the everyday concerns and those of tomorrow, call out to God for liberation. The present and the future too will bring, day by day, problems related to the working place, problems about their instability, about some material lacks, about searching for a working place, or a better paid working place, and in all these situations a Christian will turn with faith towards his God, in order to ask for support, because he promises us bread: *"I have been young, and*

now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. "[12]

Moral Problems

From the fall of the first human family into sin, and until the end of the history of the mankind sin, we will continuously come to face moral problems. On the time of the Israel people, we find out that God showed the fact that He was close to them and that he only wanted what was good for them, being ready to offer them forgiveness for those breaking the Laws. In the Sanctuary from the wilderness and ulterior in the Temple there was the monstrance[13] which was covered with a lid, called the expiation lid or the throne of mercy, where god was revealed to them:

> And thou shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shall make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shall put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shall put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.[14]

The same were the precious stones Urim and Thummim, from the breastplate of the Great Priest, which had the role of showing the God's will, in the things brought in front of him. (Exodus 28: 30). Throughout these stones God's will is shown, when there were brought in front of Him some reasons. In the situation in which there was a shade of light on the stone from the right side, it meant

that God approved the thing they have asked for, and when there was a shade of light on the stone from the left side it meant God's disapproval. All these shown the God's help or answer, help or answer that the people received from God, when it called out to Him. In this way, throughout all the sacred ceremonies from the Sanctuary and later on from the Temple, which took its place, the people was thought the great lessons and truths about serving Jesus Christ, but once a year, everyone's mind was focused on the closing events of the earth's history, and of the great battle between Christ and Evil, and in the end the abolishment of sin and of the sinners from our world.[15] God the Creator is ready today and tomorrow to answer to your needs.

Saint Basil the Great states that the evil's temptation is not a fatality, even though through it came the human falling. God gives us power to fight against it, following His commandments. If the falling was possible, repairing the mistake is possible too, by following the circle initiated by God, which can lead us to crowning.[16]

Problems and Challenges from Different Domains of Life

For all these, for the present as well as for the future, God is a help which never misses in needs: *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."* (Psalms 46:1) If today or in the future the human is burdened and feels as a slave of some vices that he cannot get rid off by himself, in other words he is a slave of sin, he can bring his spiritual burdens before God through holly praying, asking for relief and liberation from these. The Christian belief is and has to stay one of hope, joy, love, forgiveness and triumph of good over evil, and the church has to be the carrier of these virtues.[17] The Saint Cyril of Alexandria said that when you truly feel God working in you, you are not feeling selfishness, nor a selfish interest hidden in yourself, nor a temptation of an ugly sin. You feel all these as being burnt by His presence.[18]

God's Protection Gives Safety for the Future

The Christian life is not without dangers. These are even greater in a time of peace and calm, then in a time of persecution. In the Christian life there isn't a neutral area. In any feeling, in any thought,

in any decision or movement, the Christian is a hero or a coward. [19]
The fact that God is the help and the support of the human being,
gives him the moral and spiritual strength of dealing with life's
problems without fear:

> God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
> Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and
> though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
> Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the
> mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is
> a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God,
> the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in
> the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her,
> and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were
> moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of
> hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. Come,
> behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made
> in the earth.[20]

God's antidote for all the dangers that humans are threaten by, both
inside and outside, is His secular call, which should wake him up at
a state of awareness and praying: "Therefore thus said the LORD, If
thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shall stand before
me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shall be
as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto
them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall:
and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against
thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, said the
LORD. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I
will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible." [21]

The Holy Scripture presents God as being our Helper in any
moment and in any situation: "Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth."[22] The human heart which has faith
in His Creator will get help: *"The LORD is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly
rejoices; and with my song will I praise him. The LORD is their strength,
and he is the saving strength of his anointed."[23]* Knowing the divine
character helps you in all the future challenges because God is ready

to take your hand and offer his support: *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighted in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD uphold him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."*[24] The call of the mournful makes the heart of The Almighty and Merciful God to vibrate even more.[25] As a human, be ready all the time to be taken by the Hand of The Almighty and always be shown the way by His Hand.

From the moving of stars throughout space and up to the smallest particle, all the things from nature follow the Creator's will. God is the One that takes care of everything and sustains everything it is created by Him. The God who supports the unlimited worlds in the space immensity, guards in the same time the needs of the bird that sings without fear its modest song. In many situations, when people start their tiring daily work, or when they bow in praying, when they go to sleep in the evening, or when they wake up in the morning, or when the rich parties in his palace, or when the poor gathers his children around the poor table, all are in the guarding attention of God. There is no tear on earth without God knowing about it, and there is no joy or laugh He hadn't seen. If we, as people, would fully believe all these facts, then all our unfunded concerns would disappear and then our life would not be full of disappointments as it is now; because each and every thing, big or small, would be place in God's hands, Who is not troubled by the multitude of the concerns nor overwhelmed by their weight. We would enjoy an interior peace which many didn't have the chance to know.*[26]*

The Divine Expectations
of the Human Being Fallen into Sin

Recognition of Evil Deeds and Willingness to Change

"The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning. The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us that we have sinned! For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim. Because of the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it. Thou, O LORD, remain forever; thy throne from generation to generation. Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever,

and forsake us so long time? Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old. But thou hast utterly rejected us; thou art very wroth against us.[27]

God's love for man, love of man for God and for others, which is lighted and nourished in the Christian heart by the divine grace, has the power to detach man from the pleasures, interests and desires of the flesh, and has the power to call him, to exhort him and even to push him to heroic actions, deciding him easily to confront enthusiastically, any distress and suffering.[28] Given the fact that temptation is always present and installed in our own home, it is necessary that Christian watchfulness or vigilance never to be ceased or weakened.[29]

Sincerity and Regret for the Sins

To feel sorry for our sins, tearing our hearts, as the holly Scripture said: *"And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repented him of the evil. Who knows if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God?* (Joel 2, 13–14). We all need to return wholeheartedly to the Lord, in order to have always the confidence that He will help us. Perhaps we don't have the spirit of confession, perhaps the cold and distant spirit grasps us, the indifference and spiritual coldness wraps us, but for all of these there is only one remedy, namely, the return with faith and repentance towards God, confessing our sins and with the desire to be free from all filthiness of sin, wanting to live every day after our Lord's holy counsels. Confessing our sins should be a spiritual priority for us. Through what is really man falling? Not through his iniquity? We should always ask ourselves this question: Did we confessed all our sins? Do we have the assurance that God has forgave us, cleansed and healed us from the sin? Oh! God help us to confess our sins, to repent of them and give us your forgiveness. Divinity wants to restore the link with man forever, for which awaits the return of the human being, according to the Sacred Scripture words: "O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say

unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips."[30]

The Return of Man to God Must Not Be Delayed

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."[31] The whole sky, full of celestial blessings, is ready to overfill in every human soul, as a reward for all those who will return to God and who will ask with faith the help of our Savior, Jesus Christ. He is ready and is willing to give us the Kingdom of Heaven. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: *"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."*[32] Life is full of problems and challenges. When we look at God, our troubles become opportunities in which he can intervene. And for the future, as Christians, we cannot confide in our own strength, but only in His strength. The relationship with God is a source of energy for the whole Christian experience and prepares us for eternity.[33]

For all the help that Our Good Heavenly Father has given to us so far, for the entire ensure of His support, for our future, we can be grateful, because our help comes only from God, and for that HE deserves to thank Him always, saying together with all the holy beings: *"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."* [34]

The Biggest Event of the Future:
The Coming of Jesus for the Second Time

The thought of waiting for the consolation of Lord, for His kingdom, the expectation of our salvation offered through the Sacrifice on the Cross of our precious Savior Jesus Christ, serve to strengthen further our Christian convictions and to make more powerful the longing that pulses in every one which is expecting through his faith the happiness and the eternal salvation. The Holly Scripture brings before us the faithful Simeon, who, even if advanced in years, and even if this years brought with them physical and often spiritual fatigue, old faithful Simeon could have been turned into a solitary man somewhere in a house in Jerusalem, where to enjoy serenity and calm. Instead, Simeon never missed to attend that time and sharing their hopes and expectations, namely those concerning the coming of the Messiah. Old Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel and for the wonderful redemption of the Lord. "*And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.*"[35] In all his prayers, he sent the sighing of his heart and his desire as the Gracious Heavenly Father, the Almighty God, not to call him to rest until he sees the Saviour, the promised Redeemer the Messiah awaited and desired . Simeon's soul desire was heard and the Holy Spirit gave him notice that he would not sleep the sleep of death, until he will see, the promised Redeemer, Jesus Christ. "And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ."[36]

Certainly the faithful old Simeon had all kinds of questions in his mind about where, how the Redeemer will come. But old Simeon also knew that if he would be ubiquitous from the Temple in Jerusalem, if he would keep uninterrupted his connection with the Holy Spirit who warned him, through prayer and mysterious meditation, then he should not be pressed by any care, regarding how Israel's consolation, the Redeemer of the world will come. We

do not know today how long Simeon waited, how many years passed before he saw the Messiah. We know only the fact that coming one day to the temple, inspired and driven by the Holy Spirit, had the happy opportunity to see the young child Jesus Christ. The Holly Gospel tells us that the old man Simeon took the child in his arms and blessed God: „*And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*"[37]

With this sacred occasion, Simeon, after he blessed Joseph and Mary uttered some prophetic words: „*And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*"[38] Simeon left the temple happy, ready to die at any time, because his eyes have seen the salvation, have seen the Lord.

Simeon, the old faithful from the temple, represents all those believers, which compared with the entire world, are a minority, but which are waiting with faith and want above all things to see Jesus the Savior, the One who called them to salvation and eternal happiness. Simeon's spirit of faith lives not only in elderly belivers but also in young people. This spirit lives in every heart that desires and expects the day of salvation, the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great day of the final rewards. These believers, like old man Simeon, are waiting to see the Lord, keeping alive and uninterrupted their connection with heaven. And the Holy Spirit notify them about all the events that will come into the world. This category of faithful people are waiting day by day the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, expecting year after year the fulfillment of the Holy Scripture words. They are sincere believers and glorifiers of God. This kind of believers, never miss the religious ceremonies from the Temple (the Church) and from every sacred ceremony they learn something, they find

comfort in distress, they find the power to strengthen their faith, ensuring themselves that Jesus Christ will return again with glory and honor: „*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"[39]

In this way things happened with old Simeon in Jerusalem, at the first comwill happen with those who live happily waiting for the glorious appearing of the Almighty God of our Savior Jesus Christ. Are we waiting as Simeon? Are we always driven in our activities by the Holly Spirit? Are we customary from the holy church services? When we participate in the House of God, at the sacred ceremonies, can we draw from these ceremonies the fact that our Lord is coming as He promised: "*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*"[40] Some of the people expect their selfish plans to be fulfilled, others expect something bad to happen to their enemies, but the old man Simeon is waiting for the consolation of Israel. The consolation is that attribute, that encouragement, they all need, but wich it possesses only by some people. Our Lord teaches us to weep with those who weep: "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.*"[41] Simeon was a believer waiting for the Messiah, and we as Christians in this latter days, we are those expecting the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What Does it Mean for Today's Christians the Future Awaiting of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Adam and Eve were waiting for the promised Redeemer: "*And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.*"[42] Our ancestors Adam and Eve, believed their son Cain, was to be their Saviour and the Saviour of the world, but it turned out that he became the murderer of his brother

Abel, being upset that the sacrifice of his brother was better received than his sacrifice. Cain should have learnt that his brother sacrifice symbolized the Sacrifice on the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Cain didn`t had to be angry, to be envious, but to learn himself and do as his brother.The Day of the Lord will be a great and a wonderful day, and will be enjoyed by all the right believers, but for those who live carelessly, unprepareing themselves for the Day of the Lord, this day will be one of mourning, of oppression, of sadness and darkness. It will not be a holy lighted Day of Lord.

Enven today there are Christians who believe that time passes, the prophecies about the coming of Christ remaining unfulfilled and nothing special happening in this respect: „*Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision failed? Tell them therefore, Thus said the Lord GOD; I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel; but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision. For there shall be no more any vain vision nor flattering divination within the house of Israel. For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, said the Lord GOD.*"[43] This is a great delusion to believe that time passes without any change and that the word of God will not be fulfilled.

Even today there are some Christians who are asking where is the promise of His coming, because from the time their parents are asleep ultil our days all things remained as they were: „*And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*"[44] Our good Lord do not delay the coming of the blessed Son, but has a sacred purpose, namely saving the people. The Lord is not interested in the destruction of the world, but he is interested to save it. The Apostle Peter said in his time, that: „*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us–ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*"[45] „*And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you.*"[46]

**The Waiting State of the World
in Simeon's Time or Before That Time**

The people in Simeon's time were awaiting the Messiah: "*And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not.*"[47] Prophet Ana toghether with other devouted men were waiting for redemption: „*And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*" [48] As others, Joseph of Arimathea, was also one of those waiting for the Kingdom of God: "*Joseph of Arimathaea, an honorable counselor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.*"[49] About Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus it was thought they were the richest people of those places and that they could support even the city of Jerusalem for quite a while. For a while these men sat in the shade, but after the death on the Cross of Jesus Christ, they showed faith and respect for His teachings and proved to others that they were disciples of the Lord, waiting for the kingdom of God. Also our forefather Abraham was one of those expecting the Kingdom of God: „*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* "[50]

Awaiting and Preparing for the Return of Jesus Christ

The word of God, presented in the Holy Scripture, tells us: „*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*"[51] „*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ*"[52] „*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new*

heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."[53] Like the right believers of old times, Simeon, Anna, Joseph of Arimathea, Abraham and many others over time, the people of our age, awaits even today, at the twilight of earth's history, the salvation and consolation of the eternal life promised by the invaluable Sacrifice offering from the Cross of Calvary.

The Archimandrite Placide Deseille said that the Christian is a man which is awaiting. If we want to rediscover Christianity alive, which is for us an endless source of joy and spiritual impetus, we must reinstate in the center of our Christian life, the eager expectation and the certitude of the glory coming of our Lord, desire and conviction which animated the early Christians.[54]

St. Gregory of Nyssa said that we will be seeking, as it will be possible, the clean colors of virtues, mixed in a crafted blend, to take likeness of the beauty that we had before, in order to be a wise of the Image, managing to fulfill in our lives, through imitation in facts, the beauty of the model before us, as Apostle Paul did, becoming an image of Christ, through a virtuous life.[55]

The Church not only teaches about what God has done to save human being, but also about what He is preparing for those who believe in Him. In this regard, the Christian life is placed under the sign of hope and resurrection, and under the sign of preparedness for the celestial life.[56] Because of this the true believers are not afraid of the last moments of life and stay peacefully in front of any threats, being convinced that those are nothing else than manifestation of evil.[57]

Conclusions

It is possible that the future perspectives, for some or for others, not to look always in the most pleasant or desirable way, and you may face difficulties, losses of various natures, however, deterrence should not comprise anyone. A true Christian believes and learns that in such situations worries must to be thrown on The One who

has and who can do everything. It is true that the divinity promises relief, but not without human collaboration, but confident in the Good Lord—Our help, we must do everything that stands in our power, then the future can be viewed with confidence and peace of mind.[58]

We, as people, we can see future[59] only through faith, and we can take God's promises as a guarantee of increasing our intellectual power, uniting our human faculties with the divine ones, bringing the full power of our being directly connected to the source of light. Let us rejoice that everything that has perplexed us in God's providence works will be clear then, and things that were hard to understand now will then be explained; and where our limited mind and understanding saw only confusion and thwarted plans, we will get to see the most perfect and beautiful harmony.[60] Apostle Paul spoke about our partial limited knowledge: "*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*"[61]

NOTES

[1] The material presented in a sparing form within Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, "De unde–mi va veni mie ajutorul ?", *Argeşul ortodox*, 555 XI (2012), 5; Idem, "Aşteaptă şi tu mângâierea Domnului !", *Argeşul ortodox*, 558 XI (2012), 5.

[2] Cf. Benone Burtescu, *Caci noi n–avem o cetate statatoare*, http://www. resursebiblice.ro/2012/caci-noi-n-avem-o-cetate-statatoare/ (Last accesed 17.04.2016)

[3] Ellen G.White, *Calea către Hristos* (Bucureşti: Institut de Arte Grafice şi Editură "Graiul Literar"), 107

[4] Nicolae Stoleru, *Spiritualitatea ortodoxă şi slujirea creştină*, teză de doctorat (Bucureşti: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1991), *Ortodoxia*, 2, XLII (1990), 30.

[5] Ellen G.White, *Patriarhi şi profeţi* (Bucureşti: Editura Viaţă şi Sănătate, 2011), 32–40.

[6] *The Holy Bible* (King James Version, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), *The Old Testament, Genesis* 2, 18

[7] *Malachi*, 4: 5–6.

[8] Stelian Negoshanu, *Vino, Doamne Isuse!* (Bucureşti: Editura Viaţă şi Sănătate, 1999), 89.

[9] Ellen G.White, *Divina vindecare,* ed. a 3–a (Bucureşti: Editura Viaţă şi Sănătate, 2010), 261.

¹⁰ Ellen G.White, *The Adventist Home.* Chapter 78—The Family a Missionary Center http://text.egwwritings.org/publication.php?pubtype=Book&bookCode=AH&lang=en&pagenumber=484&m=1 accessed April 17 2016.

¹¹ *Exodus* 2 : 23–25

¹² *Psalms* 35: 25.

13 Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, *Scrieri. Partea Întâia. Închinarea şi slujirea în Duh şi în Adevăr*, trad. Dumitru Stăniloae, (Bucureşti: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1991), 290–295.

¹⁴ *Exodus* 25: 16–22.

¹⁵ Ellen G.White, *Patriarhi şi profeți* (Bucureşti: Editura Viață şi Sănătate, 2011), 359.

¹⁶ Tache Sterea, "Dumnezeu, Omul şi Creaţia în teologia ortodoxă şi în preocupăprile ecumenismului contemporan," *Ortodoxia,* 1–2, XLIX (1998), 81.

¹⁷ PF. Teoctist, Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, „Precuvântare", *Studii Teologice,* I (2005), 8.

¹⁸ Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, *Scrieri. Partea Întâia. Închinarea şi slujirea în Duh şi în Adevăr*, trad. Dumitru Stăniloae, (Bucureşti: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1991), 570.

¹⁹ Constantin C. Pavel, „Eroismul în lumina moralei creştine (II)", *Studii Teologice,* 1–2, XLV (1993), 30.

²⁰ *Psalms* 46: 1–8.

²¹ *Jeremiah* 15: 19–21.

²² *Psalms* 124: 8.

²³ *Psalms* 28: 7–8.

²⁴ *Psalms* 37: 23–25.

²⁵ Sf. Chiril al Alexandriei, *Scrieri. Partea Întâia. Închinarea şi slujirea în Duh şi în Adevăr*, trad. Dumitru Stăniloae, (Bucureşti: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1991), 271.

²⁶ Ellen G.White, *Calea către Hristos* (Bucureşti: Institut de Arte Grafice şi Editură „Graiul Literar"), 72–73.

²⁷ *Lamentations* 5: 15–22.

²⁸ Constantin C. Pavel, „Eroismul în lumina moralei creştine (II)", *Studii Teologice,* 1–2, XLV (1993), 12

²⁹ Ibidem, 30.

³⁰ *Hosea* 14: 1–2.

³¹ *Hebrews* 4: 1.

³² *John* 14: 1–3.

³³ Mark Finley, *Casa zidită pe Stâncă* (Bucureşti: Editura Viață şi Sănătate, 2011), 242, 323.

³⁴ *Revelation* 5: 11–13.

³⁵ *Luke* 2: 25–26.

³⁶ *Luke* 2: 26.

³⁷ *Luke* 2: 27–32.

³⁸ *Luke*, 2: 33–35.

[39] *Titus* 2: 13–14

[40] *John* 14: 1–3.

[41] *Isaiah* 41: 1–2.

[42] *Genesis* 4: 1.

[43] *Ezekiel* 12: 22–25.

[44] 2 *Peter* 3: 4.

[45] 2 *Peter* 3: 9.

[46] 2 *Peter* 3: 15.

[47] *Luke* 3: 15.

[48] *Luke* 2: 38.

[49] *Mark* 15: 43

[50] *Hebrews* 11: 8–10.

[51] *Philippians* 3:20

[52] *Titus* 2: 13

[53] 2 *Peter* 3: 11–14

[54] Arhim. Placide Deseille, „Moartea a fost biruită", *Ortodoxia,* 1–2, XLIX (1998), 97.

[55] Sfântul Grigorie de Nyssa, *Scrieri exegetice, dogmatico–polemice și morale,* trad.T.Bodogae (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1998), 468.

[56] Ion Bria, „Învățătura ortodoxă despre viața viitoare", *Ortodoxia,* 1, XXXVI (1984), 27.

[57] Petru I David, „A II–a venire a Domnului (Parusia)", *Ortodoxia,* 1, XXXVI (1984), 114.

[58] Ellen G.White, *Calea către Hristos* (București: Institut de Arte Grafice și Editură "Literar"),107.

[59] Ioan Mircea, „A doua venire a Domnului (Parusia) ", *Îndrumări misionare*, (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1986), 909–935.

[60] Ellen G.White, *Calea către Hristos* (București: Institut de Arte Grafice și Editură „Graiul Literar"), 98–99.

[61] 1 *Corinthians* 13: 12.

The Spiritual Knowledge
in the Era of Globalization

Ioan Stinghe

ABSTRACT: Tackling the knowledge supposes the study of a phenomenon which has over passed civilizations and in the same time an actual phenomenon, with great perspectives of future development. Because knowledge is a phenomenon with a big complexity, based on the relation of humans with divinity, in this article we will approach knowledge from the perspective of the necessity of recovering the sacred and of the interconnection of human with the divine through the transcendental experience, as a reliable source for the future and development of knowledge. We will briefly analyze globalization, for updating the reference frame and for being able to emphasize the knowledge dynamics in a society which needs, more and more, integration in the harmonious and rational order of the Universe.
KEY WORDS: knowledge, sacred, globalization, revelation, theology.

Introduction

Generation after generation, people wanted to find out, to understand and to know the fundamental laws of life, the universal order and harmony, people relation with the environment and of course their role and purpose on this planet.

According to Earle Babbie, the human being cannot surpass his human condition, in order to see the world and to understand

it the way it truly is, independent of the human point of views, he states:

> *While the modern perspective recognizes the inevitability* of the human subjectivity, the post–modern perspective suggests that there isn't an "objective" reality. There are only our subjective perspectives.[1]

The unquestionable reality of human limits, which affects the knowledge domain too, puts humanity in the impossibility of knowing and understanding the mystery of the Universe. In the experience of research, each approach involves a starting point. It is necessary to build up a base for formulating the doctrinaire models, the concepts, and for reviewing the hypothesis. According to Dagobert D. Runes, Epistemology is *"the branch of philosophy which investigates the origin, the structure, the models and the validity of knowledge."*[2]

The first step in creating an epistemological base can be realized through the interaction between ration and reality, in the moment of the contact with the truth and reality. The first obvious source of the contact with the truth is the sensorial perception called *Empiricism*, followed by the rational criterion named *Rationalism*, than by the concept *a priori* and *Intuitionism*. For the Christians there is another epistemological principle as a source for truth called *Revelation*. Because these epistemological principles require faith they are suppositions. The process of knowledge contains techniques, instruments, methods and ways which make use of a specific language.

As the academician Vasile Stănescu states, scientific knowledge presents a philosophical perspective of experience and one specific to the different scientific branches. The theological knowledge has its origin in the transcendental and it has as its base the Creation, the Scripture and the Revelation.

"The knowledge, along with the information, represent the most important vectors of the technical–scientific progress, determining the entire socio–human activity, in the passing from the post–industrial civilization to the civilization based on knowledge." [3]

Knowledge, Science and Consciousness

The aim of science is first of all moral. It implies a commitment toward a Supreme authority, which transcends us, without harming the objective character which every research of the truth has to endure, and without disregarding the objective application of the scientific methods. This commitment can be taken only towards God, the only source of knowledge and love, the only model of knowledge and love which inspires us. The purpose of the authentic science is the knowledge of God:

> This is what the lord says: "Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight. (Jeremiah 9,23–24)

From this statement of a supreme truth we understand that the human being who acquired this knowledge will exert the good will, righteousness and justice, doing the divine actions.

The contemporary science, due to the fact that it doesn't have a well-defined moral purpose, has alarmed the scholars. Many scientists rise from their scientific numbness, and find themselves, together with the entire humanity, in front of the thermonuclear danger. Why? Because seduced by his discovery, the scholar has forgotten about the One that has given him science and determined his purpose.

The contemporary scientist, who has forced the limits of the determinism, letting a Creator God to appear at the horizon, has to continue the way further on, and admit in front of God the freedom that He has given to the matter by energy and to human by free will. The contemporary scientist has to pass the border between Knowledge and Love, and to acknowledge that the World Creator is the Master of the Universe, his personal god, The Alive God in front of who he is responsible.

In his autonomy toward God, he has come to be dependable on human being, assertive towards society and state. He has aspired to dominate the state and society, then he has broken off from the state and society and felt isolated, and then dependent on them. In this way, the scholar without God has come to think of himself as God.[4] Science manifests its domination throughout the entire humanity; it has marked the way of life of the individual and of the society. It has determined radical changes during the last historical decade, establishing the supremacy of applicable science under the form of technocracy.

The occidental human being created Technocracy, imposing it to the entire world, even though for the moment it is not accessible to the entire mankind. This science is the result of the occidental civilization, produced by the occidental culture, based on an occidental Christian culture. Naturally, the following question comes to mind:"how it is possible for a science which does not unify "knowledge" with "love", to be born from the Christianity?"

The modern science developed from the Greek philosophy, which was adopted by the occidental Christianity too. Alexandru Şafran in "Jewish Ethics and modernity" states:

> The organic unity of the Jewish monotheism—the communion of the spirit with the knowledge, the insertion of love into the law, the joy of this world and the preparation for the future world, the association of the civilization to the culture, the integrity of the sacred and profane—was remote in Christianity.'[5]

This separation gave birth to a Christian religion and a Christian civilization in the occidental society, which came to be grounded on an antiscientific religion and an antireligious science. Thus, over the years, science and religion formed two distinct entities which have learned to live together, adopting a kind reciprocal attitude, reaching to a solution of compromise, called the historical method of Christianity.

In this way two worlds were established into the Universe, in which by far, the science helped by the technique is predominant,

in a world situated on the doorstep of a new era. From now on, this two cannot cohabit anymore and tolerate an agreement based on hypocrisy. The Christian religion cannot handle the modern science accession.

The danger of threatening hovers over the humanity. For pulling aside this threat of the endangerment of human species through science, the human, parallel with the effort of the scientists, should exert a moral effort and dominate the self. The human being has to point his thinking toward the sky and remind himself that God created everything and offered His Wisdom and spread His Blessings to His creatures, for them to enjoy and be happy.

Nowadays, the scientist is asked to accomplish his sacred mission, as a man conscious of the wisdom he posses, and by his responsibility toward the Creator, toward humanity and creation, manifesting "knowledge" and "love". In this situation, when the religion is ready to surrender in front of the idolatrous scientific materialism, the Judaic conception about science can indicate the route of life and freedom.[6]

A presentation of the knowledge becoming, contrasting and relevant for our time belongs to the academician Mihai Drăgănescu:

> The society of consciousness will be born from the society of knowledge, in this way the support offered by the society of knowledge, with the vectors which have constituted it and maintain it, can be considered like being one of the vectors of the society of consciousness. Beside the technologies taken from the society of knowledge, like the internet, the artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, technological vectors specific to the society of consciousness, there would be artificial technologies and of biotechnology for transforming the human species, the conscious internet, the technologies for actions at a big distance in the interplanetary space of the Universe, as well as technologies for actions in the profound reality, in order to produce effects of phenomenological communication through the substratum of the profound existence (which in a natural way it is done with an infinite speed), or for the phenomenological–structural effects, producing energetic

consequences or on the substance in its spatial–temporal reality. The society of consciousness will have functional vectors too, like knowledge (of biggest importance being the fundamental knowledge of the existence), spirituality, management and economy (of the society of consciousness), education (not only of human, but of everything it is consciousness for continuing with the good past of the mankind), culture (with the same observation as in the above mentioned case). The society of consciousness is being prepared from these days.[7]

A Glance in the Twentieth Century

We live in the time when the mutations and the oppositions, the searching and the reversals are multiplying, a time of obsolescence and discontinuance, a time of alienation from God and people. We see from the distance the difference between people, confronting in a world initiated on the road of standardization, determined by the development of technology and information.

The concern and fear take hold of the architects of the industrial consumer society. Their depression increases as the society, more and more organized, enslaves the individual until he comes to be insensible to the paradoxes which results from the technical development. The rationality rises like a fantastic sun which makes the opacity of the creatures transparent. This statement of the rationality, coming out from Philosophy, which is the originality of the era, is not the conquest of the eternity promised to the Logos by the antique wisdom.

We witness a process of leveling through a civilization, through language, literature and art. The intelligible can be seen in the print left in things by the work of the mortals, in the perspectives opened by citizens and by empires predestinated to collapse. As a result, in the intelligence drama, the human being is an actor before being a thinker. The individual's destiny consists in playing, at the establish times, a role in the rationality's drama, but not in the understanding of this drama. What matters is to be authentic, but not to be in truth,

to engage, but not to know. The art, love, action, conquer theory. The talent values more than wisdom and self-control.

The major importance that the transformation of things and societies has for humans, and the attention given by the established religions to the transformations of life on earth, define our time. Never had the religious and the profane been so separated. From the perspective of the progress and the knowledge development, the twentieth century brings many transformations in the management and features of knowledge. For example, the closeness of the science to the practical domain, through the way of organizing and unrolling the scientific research with an applicable purpose.

In the twentieth century we distinguish certain features of science which had a positive impact on the development of knowledge:

• highlighting the synthetic way of thinking, which leads to a new integral vision and a coherent image of the world, diminishing the science fragmentation

• extending the mathematical way of thinking in all the fields of knowledge

• integrating the historical perspective in the effective scientific creation and construction

• increasing the role of theoretical thinking in the elaboration of knowledge and of constructive approach

• increasing the weight that the applicable science has in the research, and the impact of the modern techniques on the scientific thinking. [8]

In the twentieth century we witness how the progress and the development of modern science have influenced the economic, cultural and social factor and the technological development. The step resulted from the science and technology development has revealed the limits of the scientific rationalism for validating the knowledge, and the reality that the scientific research falls behind the technologic progress.

The twentieth century is the period in which the theoretical and methodological development of science takes place. In this context,

the philosophy of science through more explicative models leads to the creation of a new epistemological profile of modern science. We can state that by passing to a new conceptual level in the twentieth century, the research determined the adaptation and perfection of models and of the investigation ways and techniques.

In this way it has come to the necessity of inter and multidisciplinary cooperation, having as a result the synergism and co-participation, in order to be able to give answers to the more and more complex issues with globalizing effects.

The Twenty–First Century or the Globalization Era

The actual tendency, based on Informatics, Robotics, Micro processing, Biotechnology and Telecommunications, is towards the applicable science which leads to the replacement of the scientific research with the research promoted by the society. This new revolution determines the appearance of the informational society, which paves the way for the society of knowledge, as a condition of the progress.

In this context, G. Martinotti defines knowledge as "an interconnected system of information and data."[9] A system of promoting knowledge is created, by integrating education, research and innovation, created from the interconnection and cooperation of higher education institutions, public research institutes and companies. This configuration in the informational society receives a bigger importance, in the context in which the production and spreading of knowledge gains a global character.

The process of knowledge has a cumulative character. From a historic perspective the humanity finds itself on a new threshold in the evolution of knowledge. We have to notice the superior value of the level of knowledge, stated by the awareness of this phenomenon worldwide, as a potential solution for the future problems of the mankind.

The informational society creates a global vision, stimulates through communication the interdisciplinary and interconnectivity, having as a result the synergism, co participation and responsibility

in a plan, and the emergence of knowledge in another plan. The eminent academician Vasile Stănescu, sustains the creation of the society of consciousness, as being the central idea based on knowledge, with a big potential for change in the global society of future. Referring to the necessary transition he states that:

> Passing from an informational society represented by the internet to the society of knowledge and tomorrow to the society of consciousness, involves the elaboration of a system of knowledge, characterized by continuity, stability and sustainability, specification of the access to information and existent electronic services and of spreading the information in all the activity domains. The knowledge and consciousness are the great values of the future.[10]

Alexandru Şafran, declared in "The Jewish Ethics and modernity,"

> The science is on the verge of a new era. Which is its source? The human being who divines himself. Which is its object? An idol fabricated by itself, a religion which it respects dogmatically. Which are the signs of the new era? These shake up the rational divinity of human being; they broke its idols and destroy its rituals. The intellectual and the pure reasoning is not the only source of science, state the new representatives of science. It is admitted that the world was created and the origin of life is searched, but it remains hidden for our view. They try to create life but without success. We act in a created world, we transmit it, we transform it, but we cannot create it. In this way we reach God.[11]

The human independence towards God, the human in the centre of the culture, the separation between Theology, Science and Culture, reevaluation and changing of human life values, are just a part of the steps which have lead to the replacement of the divine with the human. The entire socio–historical development of the mankind, knowledge mainly, it is based on the relation between God and human. The religion (religo/religare) is not only a part of history; it

is constituted as a philosophical system and cultural phenomenon, with effects in the social behavior.

Theological knowledge as a way of knowing God, has its origin in a reality superior to human intelligence, in transcendental, based on the Creation of the Universe, "ex nihilo", through His Logos and Divine revelation. The Orthodox Theological knowledge according to "The Dogmatic Theology" can be, after its way of expression, affirmative or negative, can be kataphatic or apophatic. Theology uses these names with the sense of ways of religious knowledge and ways of expressing this knowledge; a positive and a negative way, like kataphatic theology and apophatic theology. Furthermore, according to this book, "the highest and the broadest knowledge of God is by true belief, warmed by love, which is the greatest virtue." (I Cor. 13: 13)

Because "God is Love (I Joan 4: 16) and this being, He comes into the world He loves (Joan, 3: 16), and "we, love God, because He loved us first" (I Joan 4: 19) and, loving Him, we raise at Him because "love is from God and anyone who loves God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God." (I Joan 4: 7–8), but "the one who lives in love lives in God and God lives in him "(I Joan 4: 16).

From all these does not result, like one can notice taking into account the helplessness of grasping our knowledge in the essence of the godlike things, that in general we would know too little from Those of God, meaning from the being and His attributes, but, instead, we know more if we struggle properly to come forward on the path of knowledge offered to us through the natural and supernatural Revelation and if we strain to transfer it to life."[12]

The character of the theological conduct determines the social behavior of people. The unsacred human society needs the revelation of the sacred, by transcending from a spiritual level of the current historic reality to a spiritual level with a par historical perspective, on the oath of the divine revelation.

The process of globalization affects all the existential domains, including Theology. Theology had its role in the secularization of human society. The secularization and the atheism have oriented against confession, when divinity was no longer a personal God, loving, but He appeared as The Great Metaphysic, distant, and

incapable of manifesting concern for the human being. Our time is marked by the absence of God, in the sense that people do not perceive any more the presence and the work of God into the world and they do not understand the content of the reality of God. In this way the possibility of the knowledge of God is damaged.

Many theologians understood the Theology challenge of giving an answer regarding the divine existence and presence in the globalization process, in a moment marked by the breaking off from its own roots. Even though the results were unwanted in a theological plan, we notice a positive fact: the secularization determined a reposition of the Theology, giving it a new starting point in approaching divinity.

The eminent Lewis A. Drummond highlights the fact that Rationalism and Empiricism uncover many aspects of reality because there is a fundamental rationality into the universe, thus, being in the impossibility of studying thoroughly the supra rational divinity, even though He is the base of the fundamental rationality. That is why God reveals His purposes that He has with the mankind through His Son Jesus Christ, revelation which becomes "the final test of all the theological claims."[13]

Habermas, one of the most preoccupied contemporary philosophers of the solidarity between Philosophy and Theology, did not avoid recognizing "the parallelism of the answers" of Philosophy and Theology, stating how indebted he is to the theologians. He says:

> Philosophy struggles here, and in the problem of theodicy, not only to come closer to the semantic potentiality which are kept in the religious tradition; it can come to help a theology that would want to clarify the self understanding of the Christianity and of the Church regarding the cultural pluralism and of the visions of the world.[14]

Theologian Hans Kung concludes: "In this way we are dealing with a post–euro–centrism and we have to expect a post–imperialist global society, this can mean truly united nations, which cooperate on an international level. On an economical plan an eco–social

market economy is developed and on a political plan, a post–industrial society is developed, based more on service delivery and communications. Culturally, we are on the route to a culture with a greater pluralistic–holistic orientation, an interreligious society, ecumenical, multi-confessional. "[15]

Conclusions

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the postmodernist endeavor generated a reevaluation process of the basic concepts, by historical denial and critique. After this undertaking, what was considered obsolete comes forward again. The domains which reveal the presence and the effects of the belief in the divine, the culture, social and others, prove these changes. The prognosis of the disappearance of religion proved to be false.

Religion turns back in the post–secular society, demonstrating that it has survived rationalization and demythologization. In the contemporary Philosophy there appeared religious terms, recognizing the fact that The Law of God is above all the human laws, it is a sign that religion finds its right place in the life of the mankind. Confronting Theology with the challenge of the secularism and globalization, gave the chance of giving up a false sacrality in the domain of the theological discourse and of the religious practice.

The rethinking and restating of the theological truth helped the reaffirmation of the possibility of meeting the divine with the human, favoring the development of authentic knowledge, which supports progress and development of human society. Knowledge itself depends on the level of enlightenment reached by the expert. That is why the wisdom or the knowledge has its roots in God, from where it flows towards all the levels of the creation. The wisdom or the enlightenment is the agent of a threefold universal rhythm: mone, proodos, epistrophe; it resides in God, comes from Him, and turns back to God.(the Theology of Grigorie de Nazianz)

We have to mention God more often than we breath, according to the word: „to be pondered on day and night" (Ps. 1, 2) and „God be blessed on all times", but with precaution and not anywhere and

anytime, because "each thing has its time." "The Descendent God became human as for me to become God as He became human." By extension, the divine knowledge became human knowledge for it to become again divine knowledge. This is the pulse of a gnoseology, strongly anchored in ontological structures, resized after the physiognomy per se, which is God."(After the Theology of Grigorie de Nazianz)[16]

NOTES

[1] Earle Babbie, *Practica Cercetării Sociale*, (Editura Polirom, Iaşi, 2010),38.

[2] Dagobert D. Runes, ed., *The Dictionary of Philosophy* (Patterson, N. J.: Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1961), 94.

[3] Vasile Stănescu, *Globalizarea spre o nouă treaptă de civilizaţie,* (Cluj–Napoca, Editura Eikon, 2009), 61.

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[5] Ibid.

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[9] Giovanni Martinotti, *Interdisciplinarity and the Organization of Knowledge in Europe*, (Cambridge, 1997), 166.

[10] Vasile Stănescu, *Globalizarea spre o nouă treaptă de civilizaţie*, (Cluj–Napoca, Editura, Eikon, 2009), 73.

[11] Alexandru Şafran , *Etica evreiască şi modernitatea*, (Bucuresti, Editura Hasefer, 2005),151.

[12] Isidor Todoran, Ioan Zăgrean, *Teologia dogmatică*, (Bucureşti, Manual pentru seminariile teologice, 1991), 94–96.

[13] Lewis A. Drummond, *Mesajul Crucii, O teologie contemporană a evanghelizării*, (Oradea, Editura Institutului Biblic „Emanuel", 2001), 45.

[14] Andrei Marga, *Religia in Era Globalizării*, (Bucureşti, Editura, Academiei Române, 2014), 65–66.

[15] Hans Küng, *Iudaismul*, (Bucureşti, Editura, Hasefer, 2005), 481.

[16] Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, *Aspecte antropologice în gândirea patristică şi a primelor secole creştine* (Cluj–Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2005), 124–129.

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God and the Sacredness of Art
From the Perspective of Worship

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ABSTRACT: When talking about sacredness, in general, and about the sacredness of art, in particular, the problem of morality intervenes from a biblical perspective. This is because whenever we have to do with the artistic sacredness, we have to do with an election through which we switch from worshiping God to something else entirely. In the present research we will try to put the scientific–dogmatic basis on the issue of the above. Without claiming to solve the problem, we will emphasize, however, some nuances trying to take into account both the artistic vocation and the artistic intention, both the vocation of the artist and the artist's intention.
KEY WORDS: artistic sacredness, idolatry, artistic vocation, artistic purpose, holiness

Introduction

T he sacredness, though always has a destination other than the common, does not always have a divine destination. There are objects and places, parts of literature and music that have become sacred due to their historical value, due to the author or because of the message they bear, but which are not intended to God. In this context we can talk about some monuments to the glory of heroes, or patriotic musical–artistic compositions etc., artistic events that are set aside, commemorated and that claim an attitude of sacredness

from those bound emotionally and metaphysically to the moments evoked.

Complementarily, as artistic value and religious law, are those parts of the sacred art which are intended to a "reality", that people consider as transcending the perishable reality, and which lie somewhere outside time. This sacred art is intended either to the gods or to God. In this new orientation regarding the recipient of art, its sacredness becomes an object of controversy and authenticity, but never on the reality of its sacredness, but always on the addressee. Are searched arguments for or against the existence of the alleged deity. At this level, sacredness implies a different bond between the spiritual dimension of the human being and the sacredness of the art in question.

For many centuries, art and the artistic phenomenon were quite strictly related to the religious life of people. In other words, what was painted, carved, the most important musical events etc. were created for the gods. At the Phoenicians, for example, we talk about the famous Temple of Byblos.[1] There remained some of the sacred artistic achievements of these people. If we were to talk about the Greeks, "from the beginning it should be noted that the Greek art, except the later ages, was inextricably linked to religion."[2] The idea of art as freedom, through which one could get out of the bonds of religion, in general, and from the bonds of the Christian church, in particular, is very new and foreign to ancient times.

Art confirms that artistic freedom is only of those who were "bound" artistically through birth. To multiply, in schools, people who will be able to draw or compose does not assume in any case to multiply or to diminish the number of those who were given to be artists. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, *I have called by name Bezaleel* the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And *I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge*, and in all manner of workmanship, *to devise cunning works*, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set *them*, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship." (Exodus 31: 2–5) Of those who were given the Spirit, none will ever be artless and of those who were not given the Spirit none will ever be artist. This is why sacred art and

profane art can not be regarded as having different origins, but as having different destinations decided by those who got the freedom and the call of art from the same Providence, God.

In the present research, we will try to make observations about worship considering the sacredness of art and the existence of God. The artistic sacred inclination and the reverent bending toward God should never be confused. There must be a clear distinction between what man puts aside with artistic sacred destination and what puts God aside with sacred destination and which may have an artistic dimension. Rudolf Otto gives us some information about a "historical appearance of the category of the sacred"[3] starting from magic and reaching patriarch Jacob's reaction, who winces in the place where he had a dream and declares that there was God, that is the sacred, and he did not know. In Rudolf Otto there is not a clear distinction between God, as sacred, and the sanctity which He claims, on the one hand, and the sacredness of the religious artistic details, that are born from the religious artistic dimension of the artists. This, as we shall see in the following chapters, it is equally evident in music. We make confusion between Bach's sacred music and the sacred music that God requires. In the case of Bach, we are dealing with an artistic intent of the great composer. He creates music provided to the sacred environment. This music acquits itself brilliantly of the duty of corresponding to the sacred space and of suggesting the ideea of sacred, but it is a reality that proposes something to God, not a reality that responds to what God requires. The sacred music that God demands is the one we reproduce, not the one we compose for Him.

It is quite unlikely that in this short study to exhaust what we question, but our responsibility on discerning the idea of "Sacred Art" is more than necessary. This responsibility makes us more honest before God, and before ourselves and, at the same time, protects us from idolatry. The way man moved away from the sanctity of God is more important than how the sanctity that man created for God developed, the latter certainly not pleasing God.

A. The Sacred, Brief Historical Perspective

From a chronological point of view, the idea of sacred or religious outruns the Hebrew people, but it does not outrun the God of the Holy Scriptures. The idea of sacred does not even outrun the antagonism between the sacred, as artistic mythological idea, and the sacred, as reality required and accepted by God. We find the first case of antagonism shortly after the expulsion from paradise when "the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." (Genesis 4: 4–5) In that case we see for the first time the difference between sacredness as obedience and sacredness as initiative, as creation. The first one is accepted by God, and the other is rejected. God is impressed negatively by the human initiative. From that time until today the sacred has only these two shades: the shade towards which God looks with pleasure, and the shade towards which God looks without pleasure. In terms of layman the above are less relevant, because at this level the sacred and the sacred art are regarded as synergistic realities that cover any artistic aesthetic intentionality, either religious or secular. From a Biblical perspective, and consequently in terms of God, things are different.

When we discuss this subject from a theological point of view, all the artistic reality included in the idea of sacred is reduced to two perspectives: *the sacred artistic requested* and pleasing to God (such as the ornaments from the Tabernacle and from the Temple of Solomon, and the furniture in the Tabernacle and from the Temple) and *the sacred artistic refused* by God (as all the sculptures and the paintings that fall under the second commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." (Exodus 20: 4–5). That is why the issue of art and of the artist is much more severe than is typically. The independence of the artist towards the community thinking is always counted as a virtue and as a breakthrough of all everything that is art, but the artist's independence towards the requirements of God can be a

rebellion. Switching the position from progress to rebellion is very easy, but very difficult to notice. That is why, from a theological point of view the appreciation or rejection of sacred art is very delicate and requires great responsibility.

Speaking chronologically, the sacredness before the existence of the Hebrew people is very evident. The feeling and the artistic achievement were in some pre–Hebrew civilizations identical to the place of worship, the sculptural or pictorial representation of gods and to the sacred object, meaning God or a higher imaginary being. Aurel Codoban notes that "in relation to the religious experience, sacred is considered for only a century. Until the nineteenth century, the interest is moving either to the existence and nature of God, or to the institutional role of religion."[4] In these circumstances, the sacred was something that did not belong to man, it was a reality attributed only to the reality that bind the gods or to the place of worship. The sacred was alien to the human being and characteristic to the gods, but men lived their daily lives under the rule of the sacred.

Long before the Hebrew people, from Cain, and later by Hamand Japheth, the sons of Noah, branched off a parallel and antagonistic world to God's world. This world lays the foundation of certain civilizations that are counted as a holy dowry of mankind, and their culture and art are of another type of interest than the biblical culture and arts. In these cultures, that surpass the Hebrew one, art can not be separated from the idea of the sacred and the sacred manifestation. In the Hittite world, for example, art identifies itself with the architecture of the temple and the painting, with the sacred scenes. "The procession from the rupestral sanctuary from Yazili–Kaia is a real procession and not a sequence."[5] In other words the art from there is in fact a "liturgy". This was no less evident in the Egyptians. In them the music was "holy art in the temples where the illusionists spelt the god, accompanying themselves with harp, from which came a whole sacerdotal orchestra in times of great eulogies."[6] The existence of sacred art before the Hebrew people and the biblical culture is often used to suggest that, chronologically, the Bible art comes after the art of the great civilizations and, therefore, is tributary to them. As a theologian I can not agree with such an assumption. The artistic dimension of the tabernacle has nothing

to do with the artistic dimension of other places of worship[7] from other civilizations prior to theirs. The action took place in a place foreign to other civilizations, in the wilderness, and the model and the details were provided by God: "And look that thou make *them* after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount." (Exodus 25: 40) If we were to talk about similarities, they are unilateral, only from God to the human culture. The human intentions of the Jews to copy certain things from other peoples were severely fined by God.

When we talk about the biblical sacred art, we have the obligation to manage it differently. It is not of human origin, it was not the human artistic feeling that generated it. "And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the Lord hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship." (Exodus 35: 30–31) In the biblical sacred art we have to do with the intentionality of God to do something beautiful, which is why someone is filled by the Spirit of God. The artistic dimension of the priestly garments and the artistic dimension of the tabernacle and the temple should be regarded as originating in God. "The inventor of colors, shape, texture, author of all natural beauties clearly appreciates the aesthetic dimension itself. According to the clear lines of the Scripture, art has its place within God."[8] The aesthetic and artistic dimension of beauty, that does not fit within God, is a pseudo-art, although it has our endorsement as specialized people and as beauty–loving people. God always claimed its destruction: "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: But *ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves*." (Exodus 34: 12–13) These altars, these abominable pillars and these idols were works of art of great value from our point of view, but from God's perspective they were some things that needed utterly destroyed.

The same is true in music. Only the music that rests in God, only the music that praises God and worships God can be considered art, all other forms of music, no matter how brilliant they may be, will prove to be pseudo-harmonies or even idolatry. But also

this music that rests in God must have the character of an answer, answer that God can assume as an act of His creation. Just as the Bible is not created by man for God, but God uses man to create His own revelation, so that the music we accept as sacred must be, in some way, the creative act of God. This is why the music from the Scriptures, and which was characteristic to a people, should be regarded as sacred music as a whole. "Bible intersects mainly with the sacred music. When it makes, although rarely, allusion to secular music, it is virulently criticized."[9]

Distinct and distinguished, the Hebrew people leads, in the history of the Bible, a music that answers God's requirement. "The Jews did not know any other combination of music, than the one with religion."[10] Their worship life, their daily life and their war life was a life impregnated with sacred chant. In this, God was always found. "Very close to the priests were the psalmists whose hymns and songs, supplications and praises were used by the priests officiating in the temple and in the gatherings of Israel, united in adoration."[11] In the Scriptures everything that can be associated with the sacred art is associated implicitly with the requirements of God and the obedience to Him, and any other artistic achievement, regardless of its value is associated with other nations and disobedience to God. They had to be always destroyed.

The sacred music associated with the people of the Bible is as "old" as God. The Jewish Encyclopedia talks about Jubal as "the mythical father of music and he is considered to be the inventor of musical instruments."[12] "And his brother's name *was* Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." (Genesis 4, 21) The Hebrew people did not come into being in the line of Jubal, but the line of Seth, which is why we think that what will happen in the Jewish people can be different. However we note that the music is very old and we want to say that, in the history of music, it was firstly an involution in the music from Eden, a rupture due to forgetfulness and inconsistency in education. Then, perhaps, there was the evolution we're talking about in the treaties of music history. Returning to the Hebrew people we will notice that their artistic musical enthusiasm is very evident. "The Jews, writes Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, surpassed other nations. They gave

very early great masters both in vocal music, and the instrumental, masters they called *menatzeachs*, and whom we call in our language *virtuosos*."[13] We see thus that the Jewish sacred music was vocal–instrumental, "noisy", accompanied by shouts of joy. In the Scriptures we find marked manifestations of this kind and find requests to manifestations of this kind: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King." (Psalms 98: 4–6)

The Christian era begins quite differently in terms of sacred music. The social context in which the Gospel was to be preached was one clearly shaped around something sacred and secular. The Greek Theatre which made its debut "as a choral piece sung by a choir singing the glory of god Dionysus"[14] and which had a religious character had been secularized. Had also appeared the secular theaters, ambulant street theaters which promoted a fashionable life. Saint John Chrysostom harshly criticized these artistic manifestations stating that their attendance blocks the interest for the Scriptures and church: "It is seen that from what you collect when you return home from the theater. Each of you brings home the whole mire of words and songs of laughter, bestowed there upon you. But, better said, you not only bring it home, but each of you puts it in his soul."[15] Music and dramatic arts, instrumentation and artistic behavior promoted a jovial life. The religious element does not exist in these demonstrations. The religious art began to be more specific remaining characteristic only for the temples or on occasions of purely religious events.

In this new context, the instrumental music was associated with the laic manifestation, with the theater scenes, which is why it will not be promoted in Christian worship services. Badea Cireşeanu,[16] in his work Liturgical Thesaurus, shows the reluctance to the instrumental music in the early church, showing that the lack of church decisions on this issue is because "Instrumental music was introduced in the Latin Church after the patristic and ecumenical councils age."[17] Some of the church fathers speak very negatively about the opportunity to praise God in church with

musical instruments. "... Trumpets, flutes, plays, their subjects, in a word, all are full of the biggest debauchery."[18] This mode of worship remained outlawed until today, at least in the Eastern Church. In the Western Church, although since the eighteenth century the orchestra was admitted, there are some situations where instrumental music is clearly prohibited: "In the Sistine Chapel and in any church where the pope would officiate, in the churches of Lion and in any Latin Church during Great Lent."[19]

In conclusion, we are seeing clearly that, in terms of sacred music, there are big differences when we talk about the proposal of the religious communities regarding what music is sacred an what is not. The opinion remains constant only when it comes to the text of the Scripture. In other words, the sacred is not about what we offer, but what we are asked by God. "... To obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams." (I Samuel 15: 22) That is sacred art is related to the obedience to God, the art proposed to be sacred is related to the artistic re-designed that is made by man, but has no value before God.

B. Sacredness as Artistic Destination

When considering the sacredness of objects and places, we consider a particular dimension of the human capacity to create. In the human artistic creation we find, in the fullest mode of expression, the dimension of the Divinity. This dimension does not refer to shape or color, harmony or rhythm of the identity that can be found in image or sound, but this dimension has to do with the strength to do something aesthetic, a power characteristic, as we said, to the Divinity, characteristic that was also given to us, through what the Bible calls the "image and likeness": "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Genesis

1: 26–27) So, man can create something with a certain sanctity in itself, and this argument is found only in art.

Sacredness, in the development of the community and human history, represented the time and place where art had its destination. Everything was addressed to the real divinity or the imagined divinity. For the Greeks, "music was one of the elements of worship and few religious ceremonies were held without songs."[20] In other words, the act of artistic creation was intended for the religious ceremony. The composer created for the divinity and the creative act itself was intended for that divinity. In this situation, the musical composition considered, strictly, a cultic setting and an atmosphere of sacredness. "The Romans associated music with the divine service since the days of Romulus, but especially under Tullus Hostilius"[21] and "the Sumerians, as the ancient Egyptians, gave music an important place in the worship of the gods. . . ."[22] In these circumstances, we see that the novelty of the compositional space, as well as the consumption of musical art was determined by "the presence of the gods". People and artists felt that the only place where they needed to apply the creative act had to be a sacred place.

Another example is the Egyptian art. It is full of superstitions, spells, with a deeply religious content. "Egyptian art did not have beauty as *summum bonum* (supreme good), it was not an art for art, but an art employed, aiming at specific purposes, and in no case aesthetic; just as an orthodox icon does not want to achieve beautiful and beauty, these being secondary and adjacent aims."[23] We deduce from those specified by Constantin Daniel, that, at origins, engaging in artistic creation, whether it be music, whether it be painting or sculpture, was an employment related to sacredness. Artistic destination was not the beauty, but the sacredness. The beauty of art was the effect and the supporting element of the creation itself. Under these conditions the artistic achievement was consecrated by the purpose, not by the aesthetic, and the goal was always a religious one, that is sacred.

To be noted is the fact that in contemporary lay art there are not so many things changed. The time and the space for which are intended the paintings, the sculptural and the musical works have a certain sacredness. The exhibition hall, the concert hall gives us the

time and space where we load ourselves with a particular sacredness. Even at home, to the works of art we give some sacred space and an attitude of sacredness. The sacredness may be foreign of God, but it is real. The contemporary painter, the contemporary composer, the contemporary sculptor, that is all those ordained through birth to an artistic inclination, lie in their creative act in a particular "seizure" of sacredness. This makes them different and, at the same time, free. The common denominator between the human being and the Divine Being, as we noted above, remains the creative artistic act. God's passion for what is artistic and with sacred valences is unequaled and the artist encounters God in exactly this dimension he got, through creation, from Him. We talk in this manner about the most complex denominator between the uncreated God and the created human being. The common denominator, "the artistic craftsmanship", makes that all human artistic creation be a response to God's creation, a replica in which is found in entirely other dimensions the artistic purpose and the artistic purpose, meaning the sacred.

C. The Sacred of Sanctification as Worship and as an Idolatrous Element

When we talk about sacredness in terms of sanctification, things change radically. In other words, any sacrality should contribute to our sanctification. The sacred artistic which does not sanctify us, secularizes us or becomes idolatry. No matter how largely we uploaded semantically the term *sacred*, the idea itself is either favored by God, implying the holiness of those bound by that sacred, or rejected by God, implying the secularization of the person related to these or his bending to idolatry. From the perspective of the biblical theology it is quite difficult, if not impossible, to speak of a neutral sacrality. "For the religious belief, however, the sacred is a real manifestation of the Divine Being and a testimony of the divine existence. It intervenes in the religious experience, as a set of signs through which the divinity communicates with people and people can get in touch with the Divinity...."[24] The sacred objects and sacred music, if they are created by God through us, bring us closer to Him

and sanctify us, but if they are created by us both as initiative and as achievement, the situation becomes unsafe. When building the Temple by Solomon all the details of the artistic sacredness were specified by God, so that Solomon's Temple was not only a place for sacred behavior, it was a place where through the atmosphere itself man was sacralized, i.e. holy. "David gave his son Solomon . . . everything he had in mind for the courts of the House of God and of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries of the House of God and the treasures of the Sanctuary. . . . He gave him the image of the tools of gold, with the weight for those which were supposed to be of gold, for all instruments of every kind of service; the image of the tools of silver, with the weight for those which were supposed to be of silver, for all instruments of every kind of service. He gave the weight of the golden candlesticks and their lamps of gold, with the weight for every candlestick and lamp; and the weight of the silver candlesticks, with the weight for every candlestick and lamp, for the usage of every candlestick . . . and the altar of incense from refined gold by its weight. He also gave him the image of the gold chariot of cherubim that spread their wings and cover the ark of the covenant of the Lord. "All *this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by* his *hand upon me,* even *all the works of this pattern*." (I Chronicles 28: 11–19) From this description we easily deduce how thoroughly is God on every detail of the sacred art. We are talking about a condition where the artistic element is performed by God through man–artist. This reality, that can be taken as a paradigm in our research, suggests and explains the difference between the supply of sacred art, as human initiative, and the answer to create sacred art, as a requirement from God.

The situation doesn't change too much when talking about the musical artitic sacred. Building up the melody, the harmony, the rhythm, the atmosphere of praise must occur within the same paradigm. The sacred music must be an action of God in the composer, a comprehensive and detailed action. Providing, as a composer, a composition as a sacrifice to God is an act of great artistic nobility, but being, as a composer, a vessel in which God puts his heavenly harmonies, is a great gesture of obedience and repentance. Here's how the psalmist notes that: "I waited patiently for the Lord;

and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings. And *he hath put a new song in my mouth*, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." (Psalms 40: 1–3) The sacred music must be an intentional action of God, action that occurs in the ineffable of the one who conceives it, bears it and puts it in front of God as something that belongs exclusively to God.

Secondly, when we talk about the sacredness of sanctification we should keep in mind the fundamental element of the relationship between man and God, that is worship. The conventional language or the artistic language allows us expressions like: "dedicated to the heroes", "dedicated to the famous Brâncuși", "dedicated to the brilliant Bach", "dedicated to homeland," etc., but reality itself is more severe: what is not given to God is idolatry, no matter whom it would be dedicated to.

The issue of these thesis obliges and empowers us. Which is the sacred art that sanctifies us on the text line of the Bible? Which is the sacred music that sanctifies us on the text line of the Bible? Here we do not have in mind the wellness given to us by the artistic admiration, or the inner peace given to us by listening to classical music, here we will consider how the sacred artistic image or the sacred artistic harmony repairs or destroys the relationship between us and God, through the teachings of the Bible. Any reality that compromises the process of sanctification becomes a serious wall between us and God. This wall can prevent the encounter with God and prevent our seeing of God. The sacred requires the divine reality that surrounds us through the baptism of re-birth, and which enables us to see God in a spiritual way. Here is what Nichifor Crainic notes: "Not from hearsay or taught is known God, but from seeing Him. How can you talk to someone without seeing him? How can you pray to Christ without seeing Him?"[25] The artist, the composer, the interpreter need to seek the area where God will be able to influence them. Their work should enable us to sanctify ourselves and to approach God. "Scripture teaches us that when it sanctifies us, God renews us into His likeness, making us more like Christ."[26]

In other words, sacred art should have the power to deify not to secularize us, to spiritualize us not to humanize us.

In the third place, we reformulate the above questions: which is the sacred art that helps us worship God on the biblical text line? Which is the sacred harmony that helps us worship God on the biblical text line? Bach's sacred music is neither more nor less sacred than a simple Romanian doina in which the peasant tears his hearts before God. If from the harmonic point of view and in terms of compositional rigor rules, Bach's harmonies express the professional quality of a high level brilliant composer, and doina or the mourning of a peasant, in terms of the same evaluation criteria, expresses the un-scholastic commonplace of a musically uneducated, then, from the point of view of the relationship with God, there is no difference between these two creations. What makes them different or what makes them similar in terms of the relationship with God is the divine element through which we worship God properly. The music I sing should be my worship, a doxological worship. My mind exposed to praise and worship and, at the same time, praising and worshiping, must appear as being in the complete and complex presence of the Godhead. "When we reflect on the Father as boundless, the uncreated, we reflect also on the Son and the Holy Spirit, for the Son and the Holy Spirit can not be outside this comprehensive infinity and beyond their own living outside its uncreated glory, wisdom and omnipotence, "but it is contemplated in each the unbroken and undivided common"."[27] In these circumstances the sacredness of musical art should be seen as a response to God's initiative, response in which are reflected both the praise and worship and our sanctification. Also, this complex of sacred art should be doxological.

In conclusion, when we talk about the sanctity of art and its evaluation we need to consider not only the human religious feeling, but the complex authority of the Bible from which we learn what is sacred and what is pseudo–sacred. The inner human sacredness can propose to the artistic phenomenon and the artistic achievement their value in terms of price and artistic creations, elements that can sometimes be confused with sacredness, but in reality the artistic phenomenon is sacred only if it is an unaltered response to what

God requires. Art is sacred only if God feels comfortable in it, unless it completes His presence and His holiness. "And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that *was* upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him." (Numbers 7: 89) The Ark as artistic achievement was not in any way inconsistent with "the philosophy" of God and it was not in any way inconsistent with the presence of God. Analogically speaking, the artistic sanctity bears the mark of authenticity only when it is not in disagreement with the Bible and only when it is absorbed into the presence of God.

Such an artistic context is one that turns the artistic amazement into spiritual amazement. The difference is radical. The artistic amazement claims the recognition of the artist's genius ability, the artistic amazement involves challenging in competition for those in the field, the artistic amazement claims the desire to become the owner of that work, etc. In contrast, the spiritual amazement claims you become the property of the divine, the spiritual amazement involves worship, prostration. The spiritual amazement implies to recognize an authority that can never enter into competition with anything human, but it is something from the personality and divine person that finds the indwelling in an artistic creation which, through its presence, sanctifies.

In these circumstances the sacredness of music should find, in the artistic tortuosity, the path through which God can be lowered into it. Such music and such composers can meet God desired frame, and, therefore, the framework sought by the ineffable human soul, eager for sacredness, holiness and living near to God.

NOTES:

[1] Constantin Daniel, *Civilizaţia feniciană (Phoenician Civilization)*, (Bucharest: Sport Turism Publishing, 1979), 196

[2] *Enciclopedia civilizaţiei greceşti (The Greek Civilization Encyclopedia)*, translated into Romanian by Ioana and Sorin Stati, (Bucharest: Meridiane Publishing, 1970), 79.

[3] Rudolf Otto, *Sacrul (The Idea of the Holy)*, translated into Romanian by Ion Milea, (Cluj–Napoca: Dacia Publishing, 1996), 134–46.

[4] Aurel Codoban, *Sacru şi ontofanie (Sacred and Ontophany)*, (Iaşi: Polirom Publishing, 1998), 49.

[5] Margarete Reimschneider, *Lumea hitiţilor (The Hittite World)*, translated into Romanian by Paul B. Marian, (Bucharest: Ştiinţifică Publishing, 1967), 124.

[6] Georges Posener, *Enciclopedia civilizaţiei şi artei egiptene (Encyclopedia of Egyptian Civilization and Art)*, translated into Romanian by Radu Florescu and Gloria Ceacalopol, (Bucharest: Meridiane Publishing, 1974),196.

[7] Most commentators of the Old Testament try to impose similarities between the shape of the Hebrew place of worship and the place of worship af the other nations of that time. With consideration towards any scientific contribution we must specify that what was done for God at architectural level, and beyond, was received directly from God: "All *this, said David*, the Lord made me understand in writing by *his* hand upon me, *even* all the works of this pattern." (I Chronicles 28: 19).

[8] Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *Starea artelor (Status of Arts)*, translated into Romanian by Agnes Dragomir, (Oradea: Cartea Creştină Publishing, 2000), 131.

[9] Cf. *Dicţionar enciclopedic de iudaism (Encyclopedic Dictionary of Judaism)*, translated into Romanian by Viviane Prager, C. Litman, Ţicu Goldstein, (Bucharest: Hasefer Publishing, 2000), 551.

[10] Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, *O istorie a muzicii universale (A History of Universal Music)*, translated into Romanian by Philomena Oşanu, (Bucharest: Muzicală Publishing, 1983), 46.

[11] Isidor Epstein, *Iudaismul (Judaism)*, Traducere de Ţicu Goldstein, (Bucharest:Editura Hasefer, 2001), 80.

[12] Cf. *Dicţionar enciclopedic de iudaism (Encyclopedic Dictionary of Judaism)*, translated into Romanian by Viviane Prager, C. Litman, Ţicu Goldstein, (Bucharest: Hasefer Publishing, 2000), 551.

[13] Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, *O istorie a muzicii universale (A History of Universal Music)*, translated into Romanian by Philomena Oşanu, (Bucharest: Muzicală Publishing, 1983), 45.

[14] Cf. *Enciclopedia civilizaţiei greceşti (Greek Civilization Encyclopedia)*, translated into Romanian by Ioana and Sorin Stati, (Bucharest: Meridiane Publishing, 1970), 540.

[15] St. John Chrysostom, *Scrieri partea a treia (Writings, 3rd part*, translated into Romanian by D. Fecioru, (Bucharest: Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1994), 461.

[16] Badea Cireşeanu, *Tezaurul liturgic al sfintei biserici ortodoxe de răsărit (Liturgical Treasure of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Church), 2nd volume*, 520–24.

[17] Badea Cireşeanu, *Tezaurul liturgic al sfintei biserici ortodoxe de răsărit (Liturgical Treasure of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Church), 2nd volume*, 521.

[18] St. John Chrysostom, *Scrieri, partea a treia (Writings, 3rd part)*, translated into Romanian by D. Fecioru, (Bucharest: Publishing House of the Bible and

Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1994), 462.

[19] Badea Cireşeanu, *Tezaurul liturgic al sfintei biserici ortodoxe de răsărit (Liturgical Treasure of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Church), 2nd volume*, 523.

[20] Cf. *Enciclopedia civilizaţiei greceşti (Greek Civilization Encyclopedia)*, translated into Romanian by Ioana and Sorin Stati, (Bucharest: Meridiane Publishing, 1970), 370.

[21] Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, *O istorie a muzicii universale (A History of Universal Music)*, translated into Romanian by Philomena Oşanu, (Bucharest: Muzicală Publishing, 1983), 65

[22] Rodica Oana Pop, *Prelegeri de istoria muzicii universale. – de la origini până la epoca barocului, Vol. I, (Lectures on the History of Universal Music – from Its Origins to the Baroque, 1st volume)*, (Cluj–Napoca: Publishing House of "G. Dima" Conservatory, 1984), 20.

[23] Constantin Daniel, *Civilizaţia Egiptului Antic (Ancient Egypt Civilization)*, 305 p., (Bucharest: Sport Turism Publishing, 1976), 272.

[24] Aurel Codoban, *Sacru şi ontofanie (Sacred and Ontophany)*, (Iaşi: Polirom Publishing, 1998), 51.

[25] Nichifor Crainic, *Sfinţenia împlinirea umanului (Holiness, Human Fulfillment)*, 124 p., (Iaşi: Publishing House of Metropolitan of Moldovia and Bukovina, 1993), 179.

[26] Melvin E. Dieter, Anthoni A. Hoekema…, *Cinci concepţii despre sfinţire (Five Conceptions on Holiness)*, translated into Romanian by Florin Mermeze, (Oradea: Cartea Creştină Publishing, 1999), 69.

[27] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Sfânta Treime sau la început a fost iubirea (Holy Trinity or in the Beginning Was Love)*, (Bucharest: Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1993).

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The Future of Knowledge in Theology

Marius Nechita

ABSTRACT: The knowledge of God is often associated to seeing. The soul that sees God knows Him and recognizes Him. Seeing has a special importance as it assures you participation to the Seen one. But, in order to able to see you have to be in the same light as the Seen one, you have to be like Him. During Christ's Transfiguration on Tabor Mountain, the Apostles recognized Christ's glory of God "as much as they could" since they were also in the same divine light. The Lord was always covering Himself with light as a garment, but the disciples weren't "transfigured" after Christ's likeness, so they could have seen Him. Motovilov could also see the face of Saint Seraphim of Sarov because his face glowed from Holy Spirit's grace, too. The person who looks at another one inwardly receives some of his attributes.
KEY WORDS: future ,knowledge, Theology, virtual, faith, technology, communion.

We are almost twenty–one centuries away from the moment when Saint Paul, preaching to the Athenians, discovered an altar sacred "to the God of whom there is no knowledge" (Acts 17: 23). No doubt, this altar had been raised by the highest ambassadors of human cogitation, by the philosophers that have had reached the edges of knowledge. For natural human understanding, these edges are up to the present unsurpassed[1] as there is no way to reach knowledge of God through a rational cogitation. Human nature, built up according to God's image *withholds* in it not only the possibility of knowing the Creator, but also the possibility of becoming alike Him.

The border of not knowing God appears as a final success of Greek's classical wisdom. Up to the present, no philosopher or scientist has succeeded to get over this threshold if they remained faithful to the mind and to his natural cogitation or faithful to science and philosophy methods.

Saint John, the Apostle and Evangelist, debated over the existential character of knowledge, about knowledge assumed as life: *And this is eternal life: to have knowledge of you, the only true God, and of him whom you have sent, even Jesus Christ* (John 17:3). Besides Embodied Christ, no spiritual, philosophical or mystical experience provides man with the possibility of knowing God *the way He IS*, as Objectivity one who is unreached, absolute, in Three unreached absolute subjects. Man aspires to materialize in a creative manner his mental vision, to project the power of ideas and knowledge. No one else but the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Truth, guides us, actually carries us towards the knowledge of God's Son, teaches us to experience God as Love, as the Merciful, as Pantocrator, "trough crosses we didn't want" and through "resurrections that I wouldn't ask for" (Radu Gyr). In order to know God we need to follow him to the Cross, to the Hell and to the Resurrections. If speaking about God (theology) doesn't come with living, the knowledge you get is just a theoretical, scholastically, lifeless, infructuos one.

The knowledge of God is often associated to seeing. The soul that sees God knows Him and recognizes Him. Seeing has a special importance as it assures you participation to the Seen one. But, in order to able to see you have to be in the same light as the Seen one, you have to be like Him. During Christ's Transfiguration on Tabor Mountain, the Apostles recognized Christ's glory of God "as much as they could" since they were also in the same divine light. The Lord was always covering Himself with light as a garment, but the disciples weren't "transfigured" after Christ's likeness, so they could have seen Him. Motovilov could also see the face of Saint Seraphim of Sarov because his face glowed from Holy Spirit's grace, too. The person who looks at another one inwardly receives some of his attributes. There takes place a *communication* and by looking, you have communion with the seen One (Eucharist), and furthermore by Eucharist you remain in communion with Him; you

become like Him (co-union), you co-live (syn–choresis) along with God. This co–living takes place in the space (chorus) that is Christ's Body—the Church. God is unknowable and incomprehensible in his essence, He is only knowable through His actions and grace. In "The life of Moses", Saint Gregory of Nyssa speaks about this *seeing into unseeing*,[2] idea resumed later by theologians like Vladimir Loskky or father Dumitru Stăniloae. Christ's Transfiguration icon expresses best the paradoxical and tensioned relationship between knowledge and unknowing, between light and dark. In this icon, Christ is surrounded by an almond painted in dark colors, as an expression of light explosion and light abundance.

Adam had seen God's glory and remained alive, but disobeying the commandment he went blind and eventually died due to his lack of regret, says Simeon the New Theologian. The Soul is now like an eyeless body that sees God no more.[3] Thus, humankind passes from the seeing sphere to the one of hearing God's voice that was preparing Adam, as a hole, so he will recognize the original Image "when the time had come" (Galatians 4:4). Hearing God's voice (*coli Yahweh*) that reveals His will in front of the chosen people, is in a close bond to obedience. The one who hears the commandment fulfills it, but those who don't hear it are also spiritually deaf. The redemptive Word comes through hearing and those who listen to it are troubled to their hearts towards fulfilling this word. Through hearing, man is receiving more general things, easier for knowledge, but only together with seeing there is being born the overwhelming person, the hypostasis and complete communion with the Seen one, in man.

In *The Old Testament*, dialog replaces contemplation. Israel's God is *a hidden God* (Isaiah 45:15) who declares Himself transcendent to any image that might make his nature know (Deuteronomy 4:15–16): "So keep watch on yourselves with care; for you saw no form of any sort on the day when the voice of the Lord came to you in Horeb out of the heart of the fire: So that you may not be turned to evil ways and make for yourselves an image in the form of any living thing, male or female." Even so, the heavens and earth Creator does not remain an unknown God. His reveals His name, He speaks and requires answer, He dialogues personally with humans: "And

the voice of the Lord came to you out of the fire: the sound of his words came to your ears but you saw no form; there was nothing but a voice." (Deuteronomy 4:12)

In The Old Testament there are fragments with a formal negation for any potential seeing of the invisible, unknowable, inaccessible God to created beings and there are other fragments that recommend looking for God's face as the ultimate man's blessedness. On this line, "those who have clean hands and a true heart" (Psalms 24:4) are named "the generation of those whose hearts are turned to you, even to your face, O God of Jacob" (Psalms 24:6), for then, in "in the last days" those pure in heat shall be blessed for they shall see God (Matthew 5:8). Saint Gregory of Nyssa highlights that blessedness doesn't mean knowing something about God, but seeing Him in you.[4]

Moses had asked to see God's face (panîm) (Isaiah 33:12–13) because the Other one's face means a communion with that One and this strengthens Law's discovery as "a Word that isn't pronounced by a face is a delusive word, it bears within it the temptation suspicion and the lying spirit for there is no one to put testimony for him and to guarantee for him."[5] Moses received a figurative seeing of God, he sees His backside on Sinai Mountain, but he couldn't see His face and still go on living (Exodus 33:20). Moses along with the entire humankind hadn't been prepared to see God, but they would have seen Him later in the last days (Galatians 4:4) on Tabor Mountain when He came as human, the Embodied Word. Moses had seen on Sinai *resemblances of God's shine* as a foresight of the future Tabor view.[6]

We talk with God on earth like Moses "in cloud", because the Lord settled a dark between us and Him so we look even more to the light we found with great toil. Only if you look to God's things from exterior, you see Him as in dark, but the more a man deepens in God, he is deifying more and more, and He appears as light. Seeing God in dark (*cf.* Isaiah 20:21) represents the moment of "God's knowing and reaching helplessness."[7] Limited to biological life borders—the knowledge of God cannot reach to its complete achievement, but here in this existence begins the spiritual progress that is accomplished

in God's Kingdom through the rest in God's Life and only after that "we will see Him as He is" (I John 3, 2–3).

In The New Testament the concept of dark, referring to seeing and knowing Lord,[8] doesn't appear. God "is light and in him there is nothing dark" (I John 1:5); and this is because the genuine Light that lights every man (John1:9) comes in this world in order to deliver us from dark and passion. In the last days (Galatians 4:4), the Lord bowed towards earth and there found His image. Back then, the Gospel of knowing God was preached in this world: Holy Trinity one in essence, the mystery that many prophets had wanted to see and hear, but didn't (Luke 10:24).

At theology institutes, there are, for centuries, teachers trying out to present to their students, of a systematical manner, Church's dogma content about God. Thus, in a few years of theological education, there is the possibility of theoretical knowledge of many things about God, yet the school cannot offer a essential knowledge of God. Man can gain that kind of knowledge, with God's will, as a personal effort result: asceticism, prayer, virtues observation. When systematization reaches the limit, then the experience is replaced with an inert scholastic, becoming a philosophy and a scientific discipline. Without the prayer where man's soul meets the divine everlastingness in a essential manner and without this man's personal dialogue with God, the intellectual and theoretical knowledge may lead to a radical destruction of *what God has given within the cloven tongues like as of fire*.[9] Holy Trinity's acknowledge is prayer's peak. This knowledge doesn't belong to rationality, as it is the case of the knowledge following sciences and human methods of research. Scientific and philosophical knowledge is a secular one that is bordered by this world's laws. Yet, the knowledge following spiritual prayer is a different knowledge, above this world, more profound, mystical, unspoken and personal. Prayer transfigures the one who is practicing it into a theologian, as Saint Nil the Ascetic (other think is Evagrius) states: *If you are theologian, pray as you mean it; and if you are praying like you mean it, you are theologian.*

The future of knowledge in Theology depends on gaining the Holy Spirit. It requires denial of passions, an inner cleanse in order to receive Holy Spirit's grace. Man can only constitute his

being as *a place of God*, as a theophanic place of His presence,[10] as "bed" (Song of Songs 3:1) meant for God so He can rest. Saint Gregory of Nyssa describes this bed as the soul–bride with the Groom–Christ communion: each loving person who is looking to find Christ becomes "bed" for Him where the beloved One rests. Love neutralizes the margin and makes the immensurable One feel comfortable within the one who, despite his limited essence (man), is able to comprise the immensurable One, in love.

Saint Simeon the New Theologian doesn't reject *apriori* any intellectual study in Theology, but opposes to it an intellectual contemplation accomplished by the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit is the only principle for any Christian cognition. The Truth's Spirit illuminates man, teaches him how to understand God being unspoken. Without this illumination, God cannot be known and the Spirit rests no longer into a soul controlled by passions. Saint Clement of Alexandria states the impossibility for the man with bodily pleasures to be like Lord or to gain His cognition.[11] Not knowing God is shown by the man's way of living, whilst the man knowing his Creator has a different way of living, well–pleasing to Him.

In the meeting between Nicodemus and Jesus episode, Saint John's Gospel offers the best proof of culture and intellect impossibility to constitute paths towards God, by themselves, but we are offered with a testimony that Christ has come not only for publicans and harlots, but for scribes, for wise and eager for knowledge ones. Intellectual knowledge can sustain faith and God's re-cognition. For the early times of a century predominated over information, technology and IT, Nicodemus is *the mad hope of intellectuals*.[12]

Christianity has urged intellect's margins, as he doesn't propose prescriptions but offers and indicates directions. Nowadays people feel comfortable being knowledgeable well-informed beings, but Christians, those truly alive people, are those who re-cognize God during this life. Holy Spirit, settled within man since holy Baptism, is teaching him they way to be a (re)cognizing and Eucharistic (grateful and sacrificial) being.

Our path towards God's knowledge goes not only through books, but especially through our belief in Christ's word and our

prayer that became a living dialogue with God. When Holy Spirit increases the knowledge within us and broadens our conscience, then the prayer gains cosmic dimensions, as it embraces the whole world as we ask all humans the grace with the same heart, as for us.

As observed in its millenary experience, the Orthodox Church knows that God who is above any understanding, name or image in His essence. Through an experience limited to human powers, holy fathers partook to this knowledge that they have left us as a precious legacy which shall not be taken away from us (*cf.* Luke 10:42). As regarding to His love and benevolence for man, God doesn't despise our nothingness, but provides us with the possibility of knowing Him through prayer's dialogue. God has assumed our human essence so man could eventually become god, in grace, as far as He had become man. In other words, the divine cognition has become human knowledge with the purpose of becoming once again divine cogitation. This is the direction of knowledge anchored in ontological structures: through Christ, in Holy Spirit.

NOTES:

[1] Archimandrite Sophrony Sakharov, *Birth into the immovable Kingdom* (Alba Iulia: Reîntregirea Publishing house, 2002), 41.

[2] Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilies*, PSB Collection, no. 29 (Bucharest: The Biblical and Missionary Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1982).

[3] Saint Symeon the New Theologian, *Hymns, Epistles and Chapters* (Sibiu: Writings III, Deisis Publishing house, 2001), 276–277.

[4] Vladimir Lossky, *The Vision of God* (Sibiu: Deisis Publishing house, 1995), 74.

[5] Vianu Mureşan, *Symbol. Icon. Image – a phenomenological sketch*. (Cluj Napoca: Eikon Publishing house, 2006), 150.

[6] Vladimir Lossky, *The Vision of God* (Sibiu: Deisis Publishing house, 1995), 31.

[7] Archimandrite Sophrony Sakharov, *God's ascetic knowledge* (Alba Iulia: Reîntregire Publishing house, 2005), 193.

[8] Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, "The notion of Logos in the vision of John the Evangelist", in *Proceedings in Human and Social Sciences at the Common Conference. The 2nd Human And Social Sciences at the Common Conference.* (Zilina:

EDIS–Publishing Institution of the University of Zilina, Thomson Ltd, Slovakia, 2014), 231–235.

[9] *Idem*, *We shall see Him as He is*: (Bucharest: Sofia Publishing house, 2005), 70.

[10] Karl Christian Felmy, *Dogmatic ecclesiastical experience.* The renewal of contemporary Orthodox theology (Sibiu: Deisis Publishing house, 1999), 250.

[11] Saint Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, III, 44.1–5, PSB Collection, no. 5 (Bucharest: The Biblical and Missionary Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1982), 206.

[12] Nicolae Steinhardt, *Through Giving You Shall Receive*, Diocese of Maramureş and Sătmar Publishing house, Baia Mare, 1992, 13.

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Musical Excellence:
The Spiritual Panacea of the Future

Cristian Caraman

ABSTRACT**:** The present paper presents *The biblical reference points of music, The manifestations of Protestant music culture* and *The excellence in music.* The Protestant music started with Luther, Calvin and continued with Bach, Handel, Brahms, asserting itself in Europe, North America, Africa, and recently in Asia. The Protestant culture, especially the musical one, has penetrated all aspects of civilization, being by far, through its representatives, one of the most powerful spiritual dimensions in human history. The future of a better world consists of a more educated and more sensible generation in which music can make people better. The values of the Protestant–Evangelical music can contribute to the human spiritual dimension and to the beauty of its culture and civilization.
KEY WORDS: culture, music, religion, Bible, Protestantism.

The Biblical Reference Points of Music

Through music, future generations of young people will develop different attitudes toward society and will be able to discover the benefits of art. Furthermore, the groups they are part of will stand out easier and they will become the artist of the future. Music is a vibration. The young voice student will first learn how to breathe correctly and only then how to sing. The study of violin will best develop their hearing, and the study of guitar will gain the student more self-confidence and will gain a bigger power of concentration

then the other young people. The grace of playing the violoncello or the piano will in the same time correct the position of the back. Music can enlarge the educational level of young people, can increase the level of knowledge and can bring spiritual benefits to the future world. The natural world is the creation of God, its beauty being contemplated by humans and artistically enlightened through the works of art. In the Christian art, the human–divine person of Christ has kept His human attributes, art itself being further on, a way of knowing God. The religious theme enjoyed a remarkable attention in the artists' creations, museums and art collections, the musical works and literary writings being a proof in this sense. The entire universal literature was marked by the beauty, form, style and spiritual–philosophical depth of the writings included in The Holy Scriptures, beginning with the historic and poetic writings, and ending with the epistolary and prophetic ones. Music has its genesis in the Bible, and the references about the organization of the choral or instrumental bands, the description of the musical instruments, critical appreciations on the way of interpreting some songs and many other impressions about singing were always edifying for musicians. Besides, the precision and the accuracy of the descriptions regarding different sacred constructions (The Tent Meeting, The Temple of Jerusalem) or civil buildings, and the description of the priest clothing or of the interior of the Temple are worth taking into consideration by any architect, designer, painter or sculptor. For archeologists, the Bible represents an endless source of information regarding the civilizations from the old times, different buildings or preserved remains, fortresses walls, pottery, metal pieces and inscriptions on stone, clay, paper and other materials which can be considered historical remnants. The accuracy of the Scripture regarding the geographic data and historic events brings broad evidence for the researchers in this domain for harmonizing the problems of interpretation of the historic data with the biblical ones, and for correcting the errors from both domains. For sociologists, political scientists and financiers the information about the financial, political and social problems are important and relevant, along with the detailed rules about papers and ceremonies, which are generously found in the Holy

books. Likewise, the specialists in the Biology sciences, Zoology and Anatomy can find in the Bible many data about the manifestations of life from an anatomical, physiological or zoological point of view. The researchers of the Universe and of the meteorological phenomena can find in the pages of the Bible important data about the Earth formation, the appearance of life on Earth, about how the air currents circulate, about natural phenomena – thunderbolt, rainbow, rain, hail, snow—about the fact that the Earth is round, about planets and their movement in the Universe and about many natural phenomena. In the Bible we find discoveries, information and practical lessons about the way of behaving in family and society, about how to relate to people, about how to win the battles of life, and about the fascinating history of the mankind culture. Its message comes towards us from the time of the past centuries, and the source of inspiration ascends until the eternity days. On its pages we come across "the civilizations which have succeeded on the face of Earth bringing into the world the idea of eternity. Our culture began with *The Psalter* and *The Homiliary*."[1] The role of the Bible in society is overwhelming, having an important role in the affirmation and development of the human society culture. Music can keep the young people away from the day to day dangers, like computers addiction, gadgets, television.

The Manifestations of Protestant Music Culture

Starting with the sixteenth century, the Protestant church created a simple, traditional music, which could edify the local congregations. The Protestant hymns reflected the ideology of the Reform,[2] having roots in the religious monody of the Hebrew and Gregorian song and in the Hussite songs, the musical creations of the Meistersängerilor or in the old songs with Latin text. The Protestant music strongly asserted itself in France through the *Huguenot choral–psalm*, in Germany through *the Lutheran choral,* in The Netherlands, Italy, Poland through *Psalters* and *sacred songs collection*, in England through *anthems* and *Anglican verse–anthem,* until the end of the eighteenth century. The Lutheran Choral has

evolved from the monadic form up to the motet, cantata and suite during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Lutheran Chorals composed by Luther and Johann Walter, Albert Erasmus, Johann Gramann or Elisabeth Cruciger formed the *Wittenberg orbit* collection. The Bohemian brothers published the collection with the autochthonous hymns *Ein new Gesang Buchlen* (1531). At Strasbourg and Konstanz the Calvin ministers Johannes Zwick, Amrosius Blarer and Thomas Blarer edited the volume with Calvin Chorals *Nuw Gsangbuchle* (Zürich, 1536). In the Counter reform period, the repertoire of the Protestant music strengthened with the appearance of the hymns arranged by Johannes Keuchenthal in *Kirchen Gesange latinisch und deudsch* (Wittenberg, 1573) and by Nikolaus Selnecker in *Christiliche Psalmen, Lieder und Kirchengesange* (Leipzig, 1587). During the 30 years war (1616–1648), the Protestant music had as its main theme the affirmation of the Protestant creeds and personal beliefs. Among the Protestant composers of Post–Reform period there are Selnecker, Paul Eber (1511–1569), Ludwig Helmbold, Bartholomäus Ringwaldt (1530–1599) and Martin Schalling (1532–1600), in their works being distinguished the ideals of the Lutheran Humanism. In the Baroque period, Lucas Osiander (1534–1604) introduces the harmonization of the chorals on 4 voices with the melody in descant at tenor, in the collection *Funfzig geistliche Lieder und Psalmen* (Nurenberg, 1586), with the intention to encourage the congregational singing with the accompaniment of the choir. In the seventeenth century the texts are written by well–known poets and the harmonization at 4 voices of the songs is made by acknowledged composers like Bartholomäus Gesius (*Heut triumphieret Gottes Sohn, Asuf meinen lieben Gott and Befehl du deine Wege*), Melchior Vulpius (*Gelobt sei Gott*), Hans Leo Hassler, Christoph Knolkl (*Herzlich tut mich verlangen*, 1605) or Paul Gerhardt (*O Haupt*, 1647). Cornelius Baker introduces in *German Psalter*(1628) melodies of Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672). The most important composer of the Baroque period remains Johannes Gruger, cantor at Saint Nicolai church from Berlin (1657), whose songs are distinguished by melodic simplicity, expressive declamation and rhythmic flexibility. In Gruger's collections (*Neues vollkomliches Gesanbuch*, 1640 and

Trostlieder) the songs are harmonized at 4 voices and figurative bass with accompaniment at keyboard, intended for private religious services and organ accompaniment for church. In the Pietism period (1675–1750), the Protestant music gains artistic maturity. After 1700 the books of hymns were written both for the congregation, in which the songs had new texts, and for the organist which contained songs with figurate bass and only the first words of the text, the theme of the new Protestant hymns being based on emphasizing the personal belief, spiritual renascence and penance of the worshippers. Among the Lutheran Orthodox composers are Paul Gerhart (*Ich steh an deiner Krippehier*), Johannes Schroder (*Eins is not*), Johannes Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), Telemann Georg Philipp (1681–767), Johann Balthasar Kőnig (1691–1758), the last two compiling the biggest collection from the eighteenth century (*Harmonischer Lieder–Schatz*, Frankfurt, 1738). J.S. Bach, considered to be the greatest composers of all times, wrote songs original for choral as well as vocal and instrumental compositions in which he introduced the Lutheran choral. The Harmonized Choral of Bach represents the pick of the *Cantionalsatz* tradition in the history of the Protestant music after the Reform period, inspiring the sense of spiritual greatness to the generations of musician who followed, up to the present days. In the Enlightenment period (1750–1810) the texts of the protestant music are rewritten or modified and the songs are harmonized to 4 voices on 2 staffs. The songs of this period are characterized by pathos and simplicity and the texts belong to well–known poets like Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, Mathias Claudius (1740–1815) or C. F. Gellert whose *Geistliche Oden und Lieder* (1757) was put on music by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788), Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–809), Johann Joachim Quantz (1697–1773) or Johann Philipp Kirnberger (1721–1783). The modern Protestant music from the nineteenth century is characterized by the restoration movement of the Lutheran Choral Patrimony and the renewal of the Lutheran liturgy, fact which led to the authorized neatness of the German Protestant hymnology. The patriotic devotion of the composers and musicians like Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769–1860) stimulated the appearance of new Protestant musical compositions. In

1815 appeared the hymnology entitled *Deutsches Evangelisches Gesangbuch* followed in 1950 by *Evangelisches Kirchengesangbuch* with 394 Protestant Liturgy Chorals. In the twentieth century the interest of the poets in the Protestant song develops, these writing texts for the Lutheran hymns, among them being Jochen Klepper (1903–1942), Otto Reithmuller (1889–1938) or R. A. Schrőder (1878–1962). Starting with 1930 the German composers recreated and reformed the Protestant hymnology, reviving the composition procedures of the Contrafactum from the sixteenth century, of transcription and adaptation of the biblical texts at the existing songs. Fritz Werner, Johannes Petzold and others rewrite the texts for the Protestant Chorals, introducing the clerical modes and the metric forms in writing the chorals. The hymnology *Evangelisches Gesangbuch* (1950) contains traditional German Chorals, new chorals and hymns of new congregations. In the present hymnologies "there are included hymns which belong to the regional churches, and some texts and songs are outside of the traditional choral, in this sense having to take into account the problem of the significance of the modern choral against the Protestant choral from the sixteenth century."[3] The Protestant choral remains the biggest accomplishment of the Reform period in the music domain, influencing the universal music, beginning with the sixteenth century and associating the Protestant belief a new way of execution, The Congregational singing (common). Until nowadays, 20 types of chorals are known, starting with *the monadic form* and up to *cantata* and *choral–suite.*

Regarding the Protestant Hymn, it undergoes an ample development in different traditions, being an important part of the congregational praying. J. S. Bach harmonized on 4 voices many of the Protestant hymns, introducing them in his works. The English and Scottish Protestants, which were under the influence of Lutheranism introduced hymns in their Anglican and methodic liturgy. The book of hymns of Miles Coverdale, *Psalmes and Spiritual Songs* (1543) is based on the hymnology from Wittenberg. Thomas Cranmer included 24 Latin hymns in *Book of Common Prayer.* Until the eighteenth century the English hymn developed into a form close to the German choral. The book of hymns *The Hymnes*

and Songs of the Church (1623) of George Wither contains hymns for the services officiated on holidays or special occasions. Isaac Watts (1674–1748) reestablishes the place of the Protestant hymn according to the principle by which the congregational song could be the expression of the worshippers reflections and feelings. The Calvin Psalter contained in the beginning hymns–psalms in syllabic style, after that, in the eighteenth century the hymns being written in polyphonic imitative style with instrumental accompaniment and in diatonic modes of major–minor. American hymns have been influenced by the modal construct of the autochthon popular song; the development of notation created the opportunity of publishing psalms, hymns and anthems in collections like *Southern Harmony* (1835) by William Walker and *The Sacred Harp* (1844) by E. J. King. John Wesley (1703–1791) and Charles Wesley (1707–1788) represent an important stage in the history of the Protestant hymnology, in which the text reflects the expression of the personal emotion of the Protestant believers. Wesley puts the hymn in the centre of the evangelic prayer, many of the hymns being in trochaic meter (*Jesus, lover of my soul*). The collection of hymn of J. F. Lampe (1746) contains 24 hymns by Ch. Wesley, being the first collection of Methodist hymns from England. Another book of hymns was *Sacred Melody* (1761), the hymns being written in a gallant style, similar to the concert music, sometimes adapted after the secular hymn. In the nineteenth century, the Protestant hymn and the medieval religious hymn had a flourishing development, reflected in the collection *Hymns Written and Adapted to the Weekly Chrch Service of the Year* (1827) of Bishop Heber. Surnamed the creator of the modern book of religious hymns, Heber conceived the new Protestant hymnology like being necessary to the liturgical functions and to the annual religious calendar. The Evangelic tradition of the Protestant hymn records the collection *Hymnal Noted* (1851–1854), *Christian Psalmody* (1833), *Selection of Psalms and Hymns* (1853), *Psalms and Hymns* (1858), *Chorale Book for England* (1863). In America the Protestant hymns were brought by Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey. In *The English Hymnal* (1906) there were introduced for the first time folk songs along with the Gallic Methodist hymns and songs written by Philip P. Bliss and Ira

Sankey. In 1925 it appears *Songs of Prayer,* mostly ecumenical, both in spirit and in hymnist construction. After 1960 the Protestant hymn passes through a transformation and a modern renewal. The charismatic movement encouraged a common style of singing, free and without formalism, with a very expressive musical and poetic language, feelings being stimulated. The songs are repeatable and simple, easy to memorize and sing, many of them anticipating the soul and rock. The guitar and the electronic keyboard begin to replace the organ. The new musical forms of the evangelic hymn are known under the name of *worship songs.* The Baptist Church, The Reformed United Church and The Scottish Church edited reviewed editions of devotional hymns, the moment being known as *The Explosion of the Hymn.* In the collection *Hymns for Today's Church* (1982) old hymns are included, from which the archaisms, the songs stimulating the religious feeling and the respect for God, were removed. In America the Protestant congregations sang for two centuries the psalms and the European hymns until they developed their own devotional hymns. Towards the end of the eighteenth century appeared the first composers formed at the American universities who wrote and published the books of the American congregational hymns like *Union Harmony* (1793), *Kentucky Harmony* (1816), *Missouri Harmony* (1820), *Southern Harmony* (1835) or *The Sacred Harp* (1844). After 1800, in the south and centre of the North–American continent, appeared the folk hymns, known as *Spiritual Songs,* made up of couplet and having texts strongly expressive which sometimes repeat themselves. The first collection of Afro–American hymns, *Negro–spiritual,* appeared after the Civil War, the enthusiastic style of the songs and of the texts exceeding the sober and balanced one of the hymns and traditional metric psalms. The songs have a popular language, often modal, the musical scales are different, typical to the American folklore. In 1784 and 1798 Joshua Smith edited *Hymns and spiritual Songs.* In North America, Lowell Mason, Thomas Hastings composed hymns after European models, like *Antioch* based on themes from *Messiah* by Händel or *Christian Lyre* (1831) in which Joshua Leavitt includes texts of secular hymns. Starting with the nineteenth century, devotional hymns are edited in a large quantity, the tradition of

evangelic music continuing in the twentieth century with *the gospel hymn.* The songs composed by Philip .B. Bliss, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranaham and George C. Stebbins were published in *Gospel Hymns, 1–6 Complete* (1894). Among the composers of *gospel* from the twentieth century there are Charles McCallon Alexander, Homer Rodeheaver, Charles H. Gabriel author of the hymn *I stand amazed in the presence* (1905), Charles A. Tindley with *We'll understand it better by and by* (1905) and Thomas A .Dorsey with *Precious Lord, take my hand* (1932), the last two composing in Afro–American tradition (*black–gospel*). In the twentieth century the American hymnology develops in ecumenical tradition, including hymns like *Joyful, joyful, we adore thee* by Henry Van Dyke, written after a song from The Ninth Simfony by L. van Beethoven (1907) or *God of grace and God of Glorz* by Harrz Emerson Fosdick, written after a Gallic song (1931). Another type of hymn appeared in America, in the first half of the twentieth century, called *black national anthem*, cultivated by James Johnson Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson with *Lift every voice and sing* (1901). After the second half of the twentieth century there began to be distinguished composers of evangelic hymns like Carl Schalk with *Naw* (1968), Richard Dirkson with *Vineyard Haven* (1972) or Carlton R. Young with *Beginning* (1987). The charismatic movement which appeared after 1970 cultivated the *miniatural hymn,* marked by simplicity and melodic shortness, like *Seek ye first* (Karen Lafferty, 1971) and encouraged the introduction of scriptural songs. Towards the end of the twentieth century, in the American hymnology were introduced, along with the creation in 1989 of the organization *Hymn Society in the United States and Canada*, African, Latin–American, Asian and American songs. In Canada the collection of hymns *The Hymn Book* (1971) was published, the best known ecumenical hymn being *O day of God, Ddraw Nigh* by Robert B. Y. Scott (1939). The rich and varied content from a musical, emotional and thematic point of view of the Protestant–evangelic music represents a future for the spiritual renewal of mind and soul structure of human being.

Excellence in Music

In the twentieth century, the contrast between musical styles remain at a very high level in terms of quality, refinement and compositional talent but also in terms of the purpose or of the idea for which the musical works were written. The critic and composer Hugo Cole notes that what is good for music may be unsuitable for liturgy and vice versa: "Bad music is good if it fosters community spirit in the congregation and raises it to collectively higher spiritual levels."[4] Reality shows that "the music considered unsuitable for the liturgical service can satisfy the spiritual needs of the congregation. Also, it is equally that religious music played in a concert hall can transform and enrich the spirit and mind of the listener. The main quality of music is represented by its spiritual depth."[5] In the twentieth century the accent in the artistic creation was placed mainly on human feelings. Several Christian artists such as Arvo Pärt (1935–),[6] suggested a new possibility of art and human expression as part of the universal truth. The profound changes that occurred in the Western culture became passionate and involved in the interpersonal human relations, leaving in turn a very small space for spiritual issues. This shift in spiritual focus will require reconsideration of art and its place in the Church. As a reaction to the emergence of various forms and styles of music, musicians introduced the term of *Excellence in Music.* The term *excellence in music* is used by Andrew Wilson–Dickson, meaning an exquisite and professional music, well written according to all the rules of composition.[7] Where musical excellence is assured, listeners often require efforts to find depth and spiritual sincerity in the worship of God. Modern man focuses on rationality in discovering the truth and is reluctant to past traditions, this being reflected in the way of worship. In the twentieth century, the stylistic diversity provoked different reactions from composers and vocalists but also from the church on what kind of music to be used during its service. Contemporary Christian music has developed gradually in the human civilization, representing the society in its cultural and traditional diversity. The excellent music is the music through which the spiritual human being can engage in a sincere worship. In the

Eastern and the Western Church music has remained a symbolic form, where worship is the most important Christian manifestation. The archbishop of Canterbury noted in a report in 1990 that "Musical resources must be diversified: congregation, choirs, instruments, styles, cultural and denominational variety–all need to be exploited, with a combination of imagination and understanding of tradition."[8] Over time, the Protestant music has modernized its traditional ecclesiastical forms and genres for the liturgical church functionality. Therefore, these renewals correspond to music appropriate to the spiritual excellence of the future.

Conclusion

The Christian music contains the reconciliation between traditional and modern music, hence, being an isolated case in terms of styles and forms. The heart of reconciliation in diversity remains the Savior through the commandment: „Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "You Shall Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first Commandment. And a second is like it: You Shall Love your neighbor as yourself."[9] The six centuries of Protestant music (if the fifteenth century Pre–Hussite reform is included) are added to the centuries of universal art, created by the wisdom of God and offered to humanity through His creative genius. Good music in the community of faith must be easy to understand and spiritually strong. Mozart wrote to his father about his concerts: "There are passages here and there from which connoisseurs alone can derive satisfaction; but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned will be pleased, though without knowing why."[10] Also, Christian music should be sincere, complex and should integrate itself in the cultural needs of the present and of the future. Joseph Gélineau emphasized: "A very simple tune can be dismissed as worthless if taken in isolation but makes a marvellous contribution to the spirit and beauty of the celebration, whereas a great work which is too difficult or badly done can wreck it."[11] The religious musical treasures are of a great importance for humanity, because

they enhance the understanding of culture and civilization, through Jesus Christ "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."[12] By the wisdom of God man created many of his material and spiritual values, and also the institutional manner to communicate these values.

NOTES

[1] "Prefață" in *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură*, ediția a III–a (Berlin, Ohio: 1944. T.G.S. International P.O.Box 355. 44610, U.S.A). See also, Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, *Sabatarienii în contextul vieții transilvane* (*sec. XVI–XIX*)*,* Vol. I. (Cluj–Napoca: Risoprint, 2014), 316–325, 339–345.

[2] The common features of Protestantism remain: *Sola Fide, Sola Scriptura*, *Solus Christus, Sola Gratia*. Cristian Caraman, *Genuri ale muzicii protestante* (București: Universitatea Națională de Muzică, 2011), 15, 16, 39.

[3] Cristian Caraman, Genuri ale muzicii protestante, 74.

[4] 1. Hugo Cole, *The Chaging Face of Music* (Oxford, 1978), 91. See also Andrew Wilson–Dickson, *The Story of Christan Music* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 243.

[5] Cristian Caraman, *Muzica Protestantă Modernă* (București: Universitatea Națională de Muzică, 2011), 108.

[6] Arvo Pärt, originally from Estonia, it is a composer of classical and sacred music. From the late 1970s Pärt is often associated with the minimalist style, which includes his compositional technique tintinnabuli. Pärt was born at Paide. Cf. Arvo Pärt–Wikipedia (https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arvo_Pärt. Last accessed April 19, 2014.)

[7] Cf. Andrew Wilson–Dickson, *The story of Christian Music*, 244. See also Cristian Caraman, *Muzica Protestantă Modernă*, 109.

[8] Academia Regală de Muzică, Comisia Arhiepiscopală pentru Muzica Bisericească (febr. 1920), 23.

[9] Matthew 22: 36–39, *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (London: HarperCollins Religious, 77–85 Fulham Palace Road, HammerSmith, W6 8JB, England. ESV® Text Edition: 2011).

[10] Cf. E. Blom, Mozart Letters, Letter sent by Mozart to his father in 28.12.1782 (Harmonsworth, 1956). See also, Andrew Wilson–Dickson, The Story of Christian Music, 246.

[11] Cf. Joseph Gélineau, *The Liturgy Today and Tomorrow* (New York, 1978), 90. See also Andrew Wilson–Dickson, *The Story of Christian Music,* 246.

[12] "Colossians 2: 3" in *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (London: HarperCollins Religious, 77–85 Fulham Palace Road, HammerSmith, W6 8JB, England. ESV® Text Edition: 2011).

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Five Gems in the Torrent:
Historical Portrayals of Chinese Women in Sound and Religion

Yuchi Che

ABSTRACT: In the long history of the patriarchal culture of China, women were consistently stigmatized as *naïve*. What made this situation worse was the mentality that—"a woman who lacks talent is a virtuous woman"[1]—a famous quote, which had became the standard to measure the qualities of a woman. This portrayal was quite permanent throughout the cultural history of China, as even today, this stereotype is still prominent in the poor, rural, and illiterate areas of China. This paper highlights in a chronological fashion the portrayal of the woman in the Chinese culture through sound, music, religion, and mythology.
KEY WORDS: China, woman, sound, religion, Communism, Nüwa, Pangu, Mulan, Confucianism, Lao Tsu

Coined by the Harvard feminist theologian Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, the concept of *kyriarchy* "denotes the power to dominate of those 'gentlemen' with property and education—heads of state, slave owners, and heads of households," and it is very applicable to the contemporary Chinese society. "Kyriarchy can best be theorized as a complex pyramidal system of super- and sub-ordination, of exploitation and domination."[2] In the Chinese society the portrayal of the woman through sound (including music) and religion (including mythology), has been quite derogatory. To reverse this cultural pattern, Su Zheng, in her work *Redefining Yin and Yang: Transformation of Gender/Sexual Politics in Chinese Music*, considers

that it is logical and useful to apply the western ways of learning music and gender to the Chinese one since, as she believes, "each culture is not an isolated authentic entity waiting to be 'discovered' and added to the exotic palette of world gender ideologies."[3]

1) The Beginnings

In the Chinese cosmogony it is said that the universe was created by a male figure Pangu. After consuming all of his power, Pangu died leaving behind an imperfect world. The heaven did not completely cover the earth, and the earth did not hold the heaven all the way around its circumference. Due to this imperfection, a female figure Nüwa[4] appeared, and as a mother figure, she took good care of everything left behind by Pangu; using the "five colored stones and legs of a tortoise"[5] to hold up the sky.

Apart from her role in the creation narrative, Nüwa is linked with the most ancient music of China. This most ancient music can be described as a primeval sound, since the ancient sources mention nothing about a particular song, except that Nüwa wished to create two musical instruments: the *sheng*, a reed pipe wind instrument, and the *xiao*, a vertical bamboo flute.[6] Because Nüwa did not want to miss the magic of the universe, she created the musical instruments to catch the magic, and thus, both instruments are relevant to wind.

Nüwa is a mythological figure who cannot be placed into any tangible context. One can only recognize her spiritual role not only in the fixing of the imperfect universe and in giving humanity a new chance to live, but also in providing humanity with spiritual enjoyment. From this narrative the Chinese culture imagined that music had magic power, and the connection between humans and nature became allegedly more harmonious. Nüwa also served as a medium between heaven and earth; bringing the magic of heaven to earth for the spiritual benefit of the humans.

As Nüwa herself is a powerful figure, this myth reflects, at an unconscious level, the woman's position in the Chinese culture. Although she is considered important to fix the male figure's

creation, she came second in the cosmogony narrative. By fixing and completing the creation left behind by Pangu, and by creating the two musical instruments, her motherly influence is crucial through her silence, self-sacrifice and devotion to humanity. Her appearance in the mythology undoubtedly shows us that the Chinese people believed that the feminine power represented also a dominant fixation of "muscular" power. They were indeed an organic part of the social life which was hard to be overlooked.

Yet, contrary to this mythical consciousness, in the Chinese history women continued to struggle to find their role as leaders in social life.

2. Pre-Feudal Time

Confucianism became the dominant value of feudal China, even though Confucius himself lived before China became a feudal country.

The most significant book of lyrics was edited by Confucius (551—479 BCE), and it is known as the *Classic of Poetry (Shijing)*. The significance of lyrics and music holistically regarded as a unit is extremely significant as they often depended on each other, even though it was thought that the sound of music played a more important role than the lyrics. According to this book, the styles of the modes were divined into four types: Guofeng, Xiaoya, Daya and Song,[7] and they all "all seem to have passed through the hands of men of letters at the royal Zhou court."[8] What made the system very distinct and elitist is that people could only sing specific songs based on their social status. There was not pure entertaining in the art.

The Guofeng mode was an anthology of local ballads from different places of China, and from this aspect, only the plebeians were protagonists in the singing. On the other hand, both Xiaoya and Daya are radically different from Guofeng, since the character "ya" means orthodox in Chinese. It is not hard to understand why the singing was only for royalty, especially when the aristocrats went to meet the kings to offer their advice.

There were no romantic songs in the part. The last part Song means ode, and these were dedicated to the praising of heroes and gods. This was the most serious one compared with Guofeng and Ya.

The Guofeng mode defined the social status of the woman. On the one hand, Confucius' misogynistic attitude toward women was already influential, particularly as he allegedly stated that, "only women and villains are hard to keep."[9] In other words, women were no different from villains; or they were the villains that men feared. On the other hand, as a revered person, Confucius could not resist the beauty of femininity like all the other men without education. A song named Reed (Jian Jia)[10] best describes Confucius' anxiety in this sense. From the category that the singing belongs to, it is easy to infer that there must have been many romantic elements within.

According to the newest archeological data, there were twenty-six types of musical instruments used to accompany human voice.[11] All of these were made from basic materials like bamboo, wood, and clay.

The lyrics of *Reed* is about a man who felt attracted by a beautiful woman who was playing at the riverside. Although he tried very hard, he failed to win her heart. His sentiments were expressed in the singing, which describe his excitement, anxiety, and disappointment. When singing with the aid of a natural musical instrument, the woman's pride was revealed.

The women's position in the pre-feudal China is a position of paradox. On the one hand, women were considered inferior to men since their gentle nature could not lead women to be as dominant as men. Yet, on the other hand, femininity was considered very important in sentimental terms. Unsurprisingly, in the long history of China, femininity was always praised by poets and writers.

For instance, in the very famous Chinese novel—*Dream of the Red Chamber*—Wang Xifeng was the model woman whose qualities included her being well respected, having rosy cheeks, a soft smile and "willow" waist, coming from a decent family. At the same time, the author described this woman as having an evil mind like a scorpion.

3. The Climax of Feudalism

The story of the legendary Chinese warrior woman, Hua Mulan became highly popular in the Western World, particularly in America. Yet, in China, the most famous art form about Hua Mulan is a local opera named Yu Jv (opera of the Yu Province). Yu Province, serving as the cradle of Chinese culture, is the best representative of Taoism, one of the prominent Chinese religions.

In Taoism, it is said everything is made of two opposite elements—*yin* and *yang*—as well as various pairs of opposites such as *high* and *low*, *easy* and *hard*, *existence* and inexistence.[12] At the very beginning of his book, Lao Tsu stated that "existence is the father of heaven and earth; inexistence is the mother of everything.[13]" When interpreting this text within the confines of Chinese culture and spirituality, the Chinese people tend to think everything in the world is made up of opposite elements. Compared with Confucius, Lao Tsu's values are more philosophical, as they tend to focus on the rules of the universe, while Confucius cares about morality and ethics.

As portrayed by the Yu Jv opera, the story of Hua Mulan serves as an organic explanation of Taoism. A woman born with her femininity, she had to hide who she was, and start behaving like a man with a "muscular" identity.

Starting with a dramatic bass, the opera presents through the singing that women are inferior to men. While performing, the singer is dressed in man's clothes while singing in a low pitch, in total contradiction to portrayal of the feminine in ancient China.

Example 1: Music score of Yu Jv Mulan
(From http://www.zhaogepu.com/qita/180001.html)

As the opera goes on, the tune and the pitch continue on this path. If a person who knows nothing about the story of Hua Mulan watches the opera, it is very likely to assume that Hua Mulan herself either misrecognizes her gender, or she is a transvestite. Although history portrays Hua Mulan as lacking femininity in the larger spiritual sense, it is not hard to predict that even with such a physical portrayal, physically she still looked very different from men.

Another gender issue in appears later in the Chinese opera. "During the first peak period of Chinese opera in the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), female performers took a leading role in the dramatic art and stage performances by playing both female and male roles."[14] That is, there were no very obvious distinctions between a female role and a male role, and this well explains why the low pitch and the rhythmical singing are the main elements of the opera.

The end of the opera is a repeat of the start with the similar tune, pitch and lyrics that claim women are by no means inferior to men. Thus, after a person finishes listening to the opera, one might still meditate on gender equality. In ancient China, the existence of such an opera is a significant challenge to Confucius' misogynic values and caters more to Lao Tsu's deeper focus on the law of nature which creates everything.

Another condition that is very relevant to the opera *Mulan* is that at the same time, many other musical creations and drama reflect the same kind of "gender chaos." For instance, there was another opera in which a woman (Du Shiniang) commits suicide because her favorite man is too much of a coward to help her end her prostitution life which she hates.[15] Another man dares not to challenge the rules of marriage and fails to marry Ying Ying, the woman who loved him.[16] It is also important to highlight that the nomadic invasions, which at some point conquered China, brought nomadic values, as these operas did not appear until Genghis Khan conquered China.[17] Thus, the traditional good Chinese gentlemen somewhat became cowards and feminine women had to turn to be like men to defend their territory and dignity. Hua Mulan was definitely a woman who had to make a choice to become like a man to save her own family.

Thus, in terms of values promoted by Lao Tsu, one can notice how yin becomes yang, and yang becomes yin.

4. Communist Time

China did not become a communist country until 1949. However, once the Red Army settled in the Northern Shaanxi Province after the Long March, the Communist Party started to become stronger and stronger.[18] By attracting people in the area to their ideology, and by calling people from other parts of China to join the movement, the communists started to draw attention of Nationalists, the party that aimed to build China into a capitalistic country. The challenges from the Northern Shaanxi Province—particularly the harsh economic and unpleasant natural conditions—were taken up by communists as a challenge to feed the population. As a first step, they focused on converting the wasteland into farmland, so that the communist revolution could continue to solidify, a process that triggered the "Great Production Movement."[19] It is evident that people had to be physically strong so they could produce more wheat, and the women—though physically very different from men—were required to act like men in terms of performing equal type of labor.

The music of the time was a great reflection of "anxiety." The *Haozi* (Work Song)—a type of singing for the working class performed during labor—was aimed to make all the people pull or push something together as a watchword,[20] and consequently became a very popular style performed on the stage.

As part of China's agrarian history, this kind of singing that was familiar to everyone. However, what made it special this time was that the most "vulgar" culture was transformed into a high culture, which served as the symbol of the new intelligentsia and elite. What was even more ironic was that the "vulgar" culture was now a symbol for the entire nation, all the people, especially for the new elite.

In a sense, what was performed on the stage was a reemergence of what had happened in the field. Some of the singing started with very strong mobilizing words like, "one, two, three," which sounded no different from the natural yelling on the field.

When performing on the stage, women were wearing the same kind of colorless cotton clothes as men, and the aim of the clothes was to find the sameness of two genders, which is the absolute masculinity.[21]

Several kinds of working songs were popular in different parts of China, and because the north of Shaanxi Province is very dry and mountainous, there are no working songs highlighting activities such as fishing. The dominant themes include songs related to field work and spinning, which only women sang.

The spinning working songs were less muscular compared with field songs. Thus women had a chance to make people know what they did through the art form. In ancient China, women only spun at home, and a positive aspect of Great Production Movement was that it praised the work of the women and made them more respected inside the society.

The emotion of spinning working songs was usually very perky. One woman started the song by singing "let's start spinning," and the other ones would follow singing "yes, let's start spinning." Beginning with laughter, all women proceeded to imitate the sound of spinning machines, and sang how happy they were when doing their work.[22]

It's very easy to notice the dramatic aspect of the songs, as the emotions are particularly fake. Though working was generally received as a positive experience particularly for the development of agriculture, the determination to eliminate a women's femininity is noticeable in every song.

5. Post-Cultural Revolution

The Chinese people admitted that the Cultural Revolution was rather a negative experience in the history of China. The direct result of the movement was the death of the countless educated people, including artists.[23] Since the aim of the Cultural Revolution was to develop a "practical" technology, art was considered useless and Mao ordered to be eliminated from the educational system.[24] Thus, in the process of the cultural development, a cultural *faultage*

followed, as the new generation came to create a new culture, and had to face this problem.

Although there is no such a concept as "post Cultural revolution"—similar to the concept of "post-modernism," I will use this in a conventional sense to describe the cultural situation which followed the cultural faultage. The Chinese people started confessing all the mistakes that have been made during the Cultural Revolution, and the trade between China and other countries[25] led to economic prosperity which impacted the musical field as well. The impact upin music and the portrayal of women can be described as cultural progress indeed as female singers played a very important role in the music industry. On one hand, the women's femininity came to life again, and on the other hand, some women expressed their dissatisfaction with expressing themselves in the patriarchal society, and chose to do something new and challenging. Thus, the double aspects were like a paradox, which dragged women in two opposite directions.

Among the conservative group, several female figures became prominent in the popular culture as they chose to conquer the world with their soft-voiced singing style. The themes of their songs were mainly about love and romance between men and women. As this style of music—prominent during feudal China—had been hidden for a long time, since during communism, women had to suppress their femininity.

During this time, several female singers from Taiwan and Hong Kong became popular in mainland China. The most famous singer of the time was Deng Lijun. In a sense she became a milestone in post-Cultural Revolution period through her love songs and children songs. For instance, one can see the explanation of femininity through the names of several songs: *(Your Smile is) as Sweet as Honey*, *You Are the Only One That I Care About, Miss Rose, the Love Song of the Peninsula,* etc. The smooth flowing of this soft singing of the tune is much admired by the Chinese popular culture.

Another trend of singing style was promoted by women who were courageous enough to import various patterns from the western culture. It took great courage because China was a conservative country and everything that was different from

traditional Chinese culture was generally despised and rejected at the beginning, including musical instruments.

A female singer named Cheng Fangyuan took the most challenging western elements home. When being interviewed, Cheng sincerely expressed how excited and surprised she was when watching the show of English musical band Wham!,[26] which was the first western music band allowed to perform in China after 1978. As she was shocked by the "crazy" dancing and volume of music in its performance, she understood the passion that was flowing in the veins of Chinese young generation. Thus, she led a musical revolution in China. Guitar, a musical instrument that had never been heard of by Chinese people, was introduced onto stage by Cheng. She not only played the guitar, but also sang some western songs in Chinese. For instance, she brought the *Lonely Goatherd* from the *Sound of Music* to Chinese stage. For the first time, the Chinese people heard yodeling. Even today Chinese people can still sing the tune "Lay yi yo lay yi yo lo". The western style of singing made this woman a cultural icon in China, and her identity in China was unchallenged. Several male singers even followed her to start their rock and roll.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century the Chinese people started to be influenced by European cultural ideas, but during Mao's ruling, China became isolated from the rest of the world for many years, and the Chinese people thought they lived at the center of the world as their ancestors did hundreds of years ago. However, as soon as China opened its doors in 1978, the Europe-centric ideas had been adopted again by the Chinese people.

Yet, the interest in the European values had its own mishaps. With the New Cultural Movement that started in 1919, the Chinese scholars began to reject Confucianism; a philosophy that stood at the foundation of the Chinese culture. By rejecting Confucianism which was an organic part of the Chinese culture, and by superficially adopting European values, a cultural vacuum was created. The society itself lost its moral compass, as people had no rules to follow to regulate themselves. For instance, while rejecting the "parents-arranged" marriages, the young generation did not have a real understanding of the western culture either.

This instability was reflected in Chinese music as well. Music was no longer a pure form of art, but became a part of cultural industry that involves sensual elements. This was intensely criticized by Adorno and Horkheimer in their *The Dialectic Of Enlightenment*. Unlike Cheng, many female singers adopted the negative aspects of western music rather than the positive aspects of music itself, while female singers chose to wear less and less clothes during their musical performance. Clothing had nothing to do with music itself, but served as a tool in measuring their "success" on the stage. On the negative side, this reality undermines the art of music itself, as artistic creativity is overshadowed by frivolousness. European culture is beautiful in itself, but these singers failed to adopt its beauty.

At the beginning of this trend, the female singers were extremely reluctant to use any morally compromising lyrics in their songs, but as the industry grew along with the desire for chasing wealth, the younger singers had to reconsider their convictions and even renounce traditional values.

A Chinese minority girl Jike Junyi with brown skin color came into Chinese people's attention not only through her physical appearance which is different from majority Chinese, but also because her new-styled rapping. To gain the popularity she hopes for, Jike Junyi imported the Snoopy Dog character from America to perform next to her while she is singing on the stage. Jike Junyi is also trying to imitate Nicki Minaj not only in singing, but also through the clothing she wears and through the display of female sensuality. Contrary to the traditional Chinese culture which values white skin color, Junyi's dark skin makes her particularly appealing on her path to success.

Conclusion

As I conclude my paper, and as a woman, I cannot but feel emotional about the saga of the female portrayal through sound and religion in the cultural memory of my native China. The myth of Nüwa from the Chinese cosmogony continued to inspire the Chinese woman

as someone who not only completes and solidifies what a man is unable to finish, but also makes room for artistic expression and beauty. Nevertheless, the historical trends that inhibited, derided and even incriminated the values that make the Chinese woman unique seem to continue though cases such as Jike Junyi. As the cultural history of humanity is a dynamic process, the current phenomenon of globalization is an experiment in progress with unanticipated consequences on how Chinese women will react in the future when positioning themselves in the torrent of history.

NOTES

[1] 清·张岱《公祭祁夫人文》。 *Gong Ji Qi Fu Ren Wen* was written by Zhang Dai in Qing Dynasty. As this book was written about four hundred years ago, this expression has become part of the popular culture; therefore specific bibliographic referencing unnecessary.

[2] Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Political Theology*, (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2013), 26.

[3] Su Zheng, "Redefining Yin and Yang: Transformation of Gender/Sexual Politics in Chinese Music," in *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, And Music*. eds. Elaine Barkin and Lydia Hamessley (Zürich and Los Angeles: Carciofoli Verlagshaus, 1999), 154.

[4] 山海经. *Shan Hai Jing* (in Chinese). 4th Century BC. Since this is book written more than one thousand years ago, thus, I cannot find a specific publisher and a page number.

[5] Ibid.

[6] 《史记·补三皇本记》 : ""女娲氏风姓，有神圣之德，代宓仪、立号曰女希氏，作笙簧。"此时的笙簧以竹、木片制. *Shi Ji*, an ancient Chinese history book. Since there's no English version, I use Pinyin here to name the instruments.

[7] I consider the different names as common sense since we learned this in middle school, and there is no specific book served to quote.

[8] Hans H. Frankel, *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady*, (New Haven and London: Yale university, 1978), 215.

[9] Confucius, *The Analects*, Chapter 17. Sentence in Chinese: 唯女子与小人为难·也，近之则不逊，远之则怨。

[10] Name in Chinese: 蒹葭

[11] Wang Xianqian, *Shi San Jia Yi Ji Shu* Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Jv Press, 1987）。王先谦：诗三家义集疏。

[12] Lao Tsu ,*Tao Te Ching*, chapter 2.

[13] Ibid.

¹⁴ Su Zheng, "From Chinese Woman Composer Hsiao Shusien to the Role of Women in Chinese Music," paper presented at "A Festival of Sino-American Music and Culture," University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio (March 1996).

¹⁵ 杜十娘怒沉百宝箱 (*Du Shiniang Sinks Her Treasure Box Angrily*.)

¹⁶ *The Story of the West Wing*.

¹⁷ Genghis Khan conquered China around 1265.

¹⁸ The Long March took place between 1934 and 1936. This data is recalled from what we were taught in high school history classes.

¹⁹ This is my own translation into English, since there is no official version. The official Chinese name is Da Sheng Chan. 大生产。

²⁰ I read the introduction of the art online since I don't find any systematic introduction books, and moreover, the art form is a part of Chinese people's life. Thus, the name is gained through life experience rather than academia.

²¹ I watched this from *Dong Fang Hong* (The East Is Red) show.

²² From the song named *Great Production of Army and Farmers.* 军民大生产.

²³ Based on the list of the death during Cultural Revolution from http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/ 文化大革命受難者列表. (Last accessed on April 2, 2016)

²⁴ Down to the Hill Moment was advocated by Mao during late1960s to early 1970s.

²⁵ Chinese economic reform advocated by President Deng Xiaoping in 1978.

²⁶ The interview can is available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvXZSeuHY7U (Last accessed on April 2, 2016).

From Information to Wisdom

Timotei Rusu

ABSTRACT: The volume of available information is growing exponentially. It has become an explosion. Yet, most people are more isolated, frustrated and unhappy. How can this ocean of information be useful and meaningful to the third milennium of people? One of the answers to this question is the thesis of this article. *Relationships* in smaller communities, small groups, where people are connected and information is shared. In this context information can be turned into knowledge and knowledge can be turned into wisdom.
KEY WORDS: Information, knowledge, community, small groups, wisdom.

Information, knowledge and wisdom are three words that are used interchangebly. Even though knowledge is defined as "understanding of or information about a subject that you get by experience or study, either known by one person or by people generally,"[1] I would make a distinction between information and knowledge. Information is a volume of data available to be known. Knowledge is more than understanding data, it is the ability to operate with knowledge at the theoretical level. At the end of the road is wisdom, the internalization of the information and the ability to use it in a decision making process that can change someone's life.

Theologically speaking, we have in the Bible the example of Old Testament people of God, Israel. They received all needed information in the Law. Daily they were taught at home. Weekly they experienced teaching at the synagogues and three times a year

at the Temple. Yet, with all this spiritual, ethical information it was still only head knowledge. At a certain point even God complained through the prophet Hosea: "Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel! The LORD has brought charges against you, saying: 'There is no faithfulness, no kindness, no knowledge of God in your land.'"[2] The knowledge of the Lord involved the heart, not just the head. Wisdom is what king Solomon asked from God, and it was given to him. That quality set him above all others in his time; giving him a special insight that helped him make difficult decisions. This remains the needed goal for today.

Information Explosion

The history of information is amazing. Researchers as well as institutions have studied this subject. Here are some findings.

Brett King in his article *Too Much Content: A World of Exponential Information Growth*, cited Google CEO Eric Schmidt, who said: "Between the birth of the world and 2003, there were five exabytes of information created. We [now] create five exabytes every two days."[3]

Buckminster Fuller created the "Knowledge Doubling Curve"; he noticed that until 1900 human knowledge doubled approximately every century. By the end of World War II knowledge was doubling every 25 years. Today things are not as simple as different types of knowledge have different rates of growth. For example, nanotechnology is doubling every two years and clinical knowledge every 18 months. But on average human knowledge is doubling every 13 months. According to IBM, the build out of the "internet of things" will lead to the doubling of knowledge every 12 hours.[4]

Susan Gunelius in her article *The Data Explosion in 2014 Minute by Minute—Infographic,* stated that: "In 2012, DOMO created an infographic that showed how much data is generated every minute, and in 2014, the *Data Never Sleeps 2.0* infographic was published with all of the latest stats. . . . Below are some key pieces of data that might surprise you.

Every minute:
- Facebook users share nearly 2.5 million pieces of content.
- Twitter users tweet nearly 300,000 times.
- Instagram users post nearly 220,000 new photos.
- YouTube users upload 72 hours of new video content.
- Apple users download nearly 50,000 apps.
- Email users send over 200 million messages.
- Amazon generates over $80,000 in online sales."[5]

These figures are beyond any imagination or prediction. The future is easier to be understood from our time. William Koff,[6] and Paul Gustafson[7], in a study called *Data rEvolution*, explains that "Whereas in the past data was primarily generated in enterprise systems, today's data comes from many additional sources: social networks, blogs, chat rooms, product review sites, communities, web pages, email, documents, images, videos, music and sensors. It is often chaotic—unstructured—and doesn't fit neatly into the orderly—structured—world of the past. . . . The Data rEvolution is both a revolution and an evolution. The revolution lies in: new kinds of data, both people–generated and machine generated (e.g., consumer data, query data, sensor data, actuator data), massive amounts of data, complexity of data, diversity of data, new ways to organize and manage the data for rapid processing, new tools for gleaning insights from the data, new linkages, data opening up for more widespread analysis, use and experimentation. The evolution lies in the steady advances of the technology base itself—compute and storage platforms, applications, architectures, and the communication networks that tie everything together."[8]

People of today are invaded with loads of information. Brett King in his article *Too Much Content: A World of Exponential Information Growth*, cited William Dudley, *Sybase 365:* "All of this talk about trillions got me thinking how much is 1 trillion? 1 trillion seconds = 32,000 years. Another way of looking at 1 trillion is that 1 trillion SMS messages are approximately 32,000 messages per second for every second of 1 year. And the world is up to just over 3 trillion for the 1st half of 2010."[9] There are many different measures of this phenomenon. IDC predicts that the digital universe will be

44 times bigger in 2020 than it was in 2009, totaling a staggering 35 zeta–bytes (1 zeta–byte = 1.000.000.000.000.000.000.000 bytes).[10] EMC reports that the number of customers storing a peta–byte or more of data will grow from 1,000 (reached in 2010) to 100,000 before the end of the decade. . . .[11] In 2010 Gartner reported that enterprise data growth will be 650 percent over the next five years, and that 80 percent of that will be unstructured.[12]

The Results of Information Explosion

This is what is happening and what is going to happen with the information. But what is happening with us? Are we more knowledgable than before? Are we wiser? Do we have better relationships? Are we happier?

Information Overload
The first answer is "NO." We are not wiser! We have more information, but less wisdom. Information is to be used in day by day life. Ken Blanchard believes that "true learning involves a change in your behaviour. In fact... learning is a journey from knowing to doing."[13] Why is it that with such a flood of information, even knowledge, people know less? Ken studied the phenomenon and found out that people don't learn and start doing what they know because of what he called "information overload". People read something and jump to the next book, the next article, the next CD. Information is available, but "information overload" leads to some real problems. It immobilizes us. . . . When we expose ourselves to new knowledge all the time with no pause for integrating our new know–how and put it into action . . . we become brain cluttered. This is why so many people are drowning in a sea of information."[14]

Lack of Character
The answer to our second question is "NO." We do not have better relationships, we do not treat other human beings with due respect. With all the knowledge we possess there should be a great progress in behaviour, in relationships, in character. We are more

sophisticated than any other generation, still, our character and our way of treating others does not keep pace with knowledge.

Dallas Willard presents the drama that took place in academic circles, especially in the most prestigious universities. He cites Derek Bok, president of Harvard University who identified a change in the academic approach. In other days, Bok pointed out "the instructor's aim was . . . to foster a belief in commonly accepted moral values. Now all this is changed: today's course in applied ethics does not seek to convey a set of moral truths but tries to encourage the student to think carefully about complex moral issues."[15] Dallas Willard continues stating that "there now is no recongnized moral knowledge upon which projects of fostering moral development could be based."[16]

In the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* Robert Coles, profesor of psychiatry and medical humanities at Harvard wrote an essay on *The Disparity Between Intellect and Character.* The task of connecting intellect to character, Coles said "is daunting".[17] One of his students decided to leave the school. As she had her last talk with professor Cole, she said "I've been taking all these philosophy courses, and we talk about what's true, what's important, what's *good*. Well, how do you teach people to *be* good? What's the point of *knowing* good if you don't keep trying to *become* a good person?"[18]

Isolation

The answer to the third question is again is "NO." We are not happier. It is obvious that, at least in western society, the standard of living has grown considerably in the last fifty years. We have better jobs, have moved to bigger towns, own bigger cars to drive on bigger roads, live in bigger homes, shop from bigger supermarkets. On top of these, there are a multitude of devises that promise information and communication: mobile phones, ipods, ipads, laptops... with zettabytes of information available. From a distance, we are much better than before. Still, the statistics are far from being positive. People are insolated, frustrated and this kills them. The Global suicide rates have increased 60% in the past 45 years. On average, one person dies by suicide every 40 seconds

somewhere in the world. Over one million people die by suicide worldwide each year. [19]

Justin Worland in his article *Why Loneliness May Be the Next Big Public–Health Issue* states that: "Loneliness kills. That's the conclusion of a new study by Brigham Young University researchers who say they are sounding the alarm on what could be the next big public–health issue, on par with obesity and substance abuse. The subjective feeling of loneliness increases risk of death by 26%, according to the new study in the journal *Perspectives on Psychological Science.* Social isolation—or lacking social connection—and living alone were found to be even more devastating to a person's health than feeling lonely, respectively increasing mortality risk by 29% to 32%."[20]

But this is not all. According to research carried out over the past decade at the University of Chicago, the feeling of loneliness triggers what psychologists call hypervigilance of social threat. In this state, which is entered into unknowingly, the individual becomes hyperalert to rejection, growing increasingly inclined to perceive social interactions as tinged with hostility or scorn. The result is a vicious circle of withdrawal, in which the lonely person becomes increasingly suspicious, intensifying their sense of isolation.[21]

Loneliness is recognized as a problem man had even prior to "The Fall." First man had a wonderfull relationship with God, in obedience and communion. He also had a relationship with all the creation, ruling over it. There was one unmet need for Adam, the need for a person, like him, to have a relationship with. It seems like this need was not meet by God nor by creation. John Ortberg described it as a "human shaped hole".[22] Long after "The Fall" this human shaped hole is getting wider and the hope for a genuine solution is less visible. Skepticism closes almost any solution for a real cure.

The Solution

We must be optimistically looking for solutions. There must be a solution to information overload, to lack of character and isolation. We just need to look for it in the right place.

The easiest solutions are the technical ones: for informatic overload people build bigger filters. People are more able to filter what they want to see or receive, and in a sense they will get more power over the flood of information. But this is not a solution to personal problems: less knowledge, less wisdom and less happiness. What shall we do with oversuperficial students, robotized workers, privatized (online) worshipers, absent fathers and insolated neighbors?

For a real solution we need to turn to our Creator. God is the ultimate reality and the answer to so many problems that man faces. The Bible presents a triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is a mystery, above our ability to understand, but it is all right because we are mere humans and He is God. Even the concept of *trinity* (one God in three person) is so challenging, there is an intrinsic truth that shines out of it: God lives in a loving relationship. When we read that *God is love*, we understand that love is a relationship word. Love implies giving to someone and receiving from someone.

God intended the same loving community when He created man and woman. *God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.* (Genesis 1:27) His image is not the male or the female, but male *and* female in a loving, trusting, harmonious relationship. The closest relationship we can experience is in a godly family. It is not a surprise that married people are 10% happier than unmaried people.[23] Likewise, His intended relationships are found in an extended family, friends and other smaller communities.

Jesus Christ, came to earth and gave us an example of a loving community where information became transformational. Mark notices that "Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those He wanted, and they came to Him. He appointed twelve that they *might be with Him* and that He might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons." (Mark 3:13–15) The first opportunity of the twelve disciples was to spend time with Jesus, to be connected, to be a community, like a family. This setting helped them to feel loved, important and open to each other. This small group fostered a teachable spirit and a transformation from what they knew to what they became.

A key word is *connected* in a community. This is exactly what is lost in our age dominated with so many avenues to be connected through social media, to have virtual friends, followers, people you never met and perhaps you will never meet. Is the internet creating a real community? Does it connect people? Not at all. Whatever promised to connect people really disconnected them. They celebrate their birthdays *alone*, with hundreds of birthday wishes on facebook, they suffer alone and cry alone. Reality hits home, it doesn't matter how many "likes" they got to their recently posted photo.

Most of the people today are like the paralyzed man whom Jesus visited at Bethesda. He was sick thirty–eight years. When Jesus asked him if he wanted to get well, his answer was revealing: "I have no one to help me" (John 5:7). I have no one*, I am alone*, this is a heart cry even today!

Olivia Laing, in her article, *The Future of Loneliness*, explained that "the promise of the internet is contact. It seems to offer an antidote to loneliness, trumping even the most utopian urban environment by enabling strangers to develop relationships along shared lines of interest, no matter how shy or isolated they might be in their own physical lives."[24] She continued, destroying the internet connection myth saying: "But proximity, as city dwellers know, does not necessarily mean intimacy. Access to other people is not by itself enough to dispel the gloom of internal isolation. Loneliness can be most acute in a crowd."[25]

But this doesn't have to be so! Loneliness can be overcome by belonging to a caring community. The hyper–vigilance for social threat developed in time is slowly replaced with trust and vulnerability. Dr. Brené Brown conducted thousands of interviews to discover what lies at the root of social connection. "A thorough analysis of the data revealed what it was: vulnerability. To be clear, vulnerability does not mean being weak or submissive. To the contrary, it implies the courage to be your authentic self. The rewards of vulnerability are immeasurable. When you embrace an authentic and vulnerable stance toward life, people will meet you there in that openness, allowing you to experience true connection.[26] The implication of a great connecting activity is that

people became more open to real friendships. Studies showed that close work friendships boost employee satisfaction by 50%.[27]

Community is also a place to get wiser. Jesus took twelve disciples to teach them, to train them, to transform them and to equip them for the job ahead. There is a miracle taking place in such a community: people learn from each other and are shaped by each other. There is a dynamic of positive change. Jesus could have taken one disciple at a time and spent three month on a one to one experience, but he chose to give them a community to be informed and transformed.

Blanchard, Meyer and Ruhe offer the passing of knowledge as a solution for the gap between knowing and doing. They recognized that people get loads of information at different conferences or seminars, but as soon as they go home, they are too busy to go back to work. Their advice is to "pass the knowledge on" within the week from the time they get the information. Instead of learning more and more without applying it "people should learn less more and not more less."[28] This involve what they called "spaced repetition". Jesus did that 200 years before Blanchard recognized the principle. Jesus did not tell the disciples all the information at once, but He taught them slowly and repeated until they got it. Actually, the most important and radical teaching they received came only after Jesus rose from the dead.

Jesus was the perfect teacher, He decided the curriculum, the process of learning and most importantly the outcome of learning. At the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) Jesus was very clear about who is really graduating; who will be accepted into His Kingdom. He gave them the illustration of fruit. "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:17–20). You graduate when you have fruit, not only branches and life. And the final words are straight forward: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. [22] Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not

prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' [23] And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matthew 7:21–23).

It is great to have information, to aquire knowledge, but the fruit of knowledge is your character, behavior, and your deeds. That is why either a family or a small group is the best setting for a connecting community. It helps overcome loneliness, build character, turn information into knowledge, and knowledge into wisdom.

NOTES

[1] Cf http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/knowledge (Last accesed on March 23, 2016.)

[2] Hosea 4:1

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[4] David Russell Schilling, "Knowledge Doubling Every 12 Months, Soon to be Every 12 Hours" http://www.industrytap.com/knowledge-doubling-every-12-months-soon-to-be-every-12-hours/3950?utm_content=buffer99c87&utm_medium=social&utm_source=plus.google.com&utm_campaign=buffer (Last accessed on April 10, 2016.)

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[7] Director, Leading Edge Forum.

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[21] OIivia Laing, "The future of Leneliness", Cf. http://www.theguardian.com/ society/2015/apr/01/future-of-loneliness-internet-isolation (Last accessed on April 9, 2016.)

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[23] Charnita Fance, "The Scientific Facts of Happiness You Never Knew," Cf. http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/the-science-happiness.html (Last accessed on April 9, 2016.

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Christ: The Divine Solution
to the Human Problem

Samuiel Bâlc

ABSTRACT: In His plan which God put together from all eternity, He prepared everything that was necessary for the rehabilitation of mankind who had fallen into sin. The central point of this divine plan was the sacrifice of atonement for sin through His only Son through whom He would secure the redemption of man. Through His life and work Christ fulfilled the greatest mission ever while offering at the same time a worthy model to be followed in every Christian missionary activity. By carefully reading through the Holy Scriptures as well as other Christian authors, it can be affirmed without reservation the fact that Christ was, is and remains the unique solution for the human problem.
KEY WORDS: Christ, divine solution, teaching, human problem, influence.

In the course of time, people have distinguished themselves by the response they have given to the question: "Who is Jesus?" The majority of people accept the existence of Jesus, the fact that He lived and taught others as no one else. The person of the Lord Jesus Christ however represents more than just an historical reality. Christ was, is and remains the divine solution for the human problem, a fact that is also evident from the first book of the Bible (Gen. 3:15). Because His teaching was radical, it also stirred up much opposition. However, as remarks Sterie Diamandi:

> Whenever He speaks to the crowd announcing and explaining the Kingdom of God, the listeners sense the shiver of eternity,

a sublime religious enthusiasm, the splendor of moral beauty and the impetuous tumult of aspiration for perfection. The words of Jesus are like lightning which fills the night. In a flash across the darkness tearing it apart, it sees the high peaks which pierce the heavens and the heights by which the soul is lain bare with contemplation of the most wonderful views that the universe and life can offer.[1]

The person and work of Jesus have generated and continue to generate a multitude of opinions which were intended to clarify but which instead have created a certain amount of confusion. This has been pointed out by Robert Bowman and J. Ed. Komoszewski in their book, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, as follows:

> The different interpretations which have been given to Jesus are loaded with prejudice. He is a powerful figure who people desire to have on their side—and who are ready to recreate according to their own image in order to assure His help . . . I have a sense—in which I am not able to escape—that I have taken Jesus' question "Who do you think I am?" and have changed it to "Who do you want Me to be?"[2]

What is surprising when we read about the work of Jesus, is the reaction of the teachers and religious leaders concerning Him. The question that constantly comes out of the mouths of the religious authoritites as well as the crowds who have gathered to listen to Him is: "Who is this man?"[3] Even the disciples, after seeing His authority over nature unleashed asked themselves: "Who is this man?" (Mark 4:35–41)

Everyone was in agreement that Jesus was a special person. For some, it meant that He represented a great hope while for others He was a great threat. Toward the end of His work on earth, the questions surrounding the identity of Jesus reached a culmination which is evident for example, in Matt. 16:13–16. Here Jesus asks "Who do the people say that the Son of Man is? . . . but who do you say that I am?" (NASB). "*You are the Christ*" recognizes his royalty, the fact that He is the Annointed of God. "*You are the Son of the living God*" understands His divinity, that He is worthy of receiving worship.

In contrast with the religious community of the day who prided themselves in their self righteousness, Jesus deliberately identified Himself with those for whom He came to suffer. In spite of all of this, He was met with indifference or unbelief by the multitudes, with hostility shown by the circles of influence and with fierce responses. Instead of generating praise and unconditional allegience, His miracles and divine teaching became occasions for scandal and division. In spite of all these things, it is surprising for some how Jesus could say: *"Heaven and earth shall pass away but My words shall not pass away"* (Matt. 24:35)

> If we did not have at hand the perspective of time and the convincing reality of the works, it would certainly be true that we would be tempted to conclude that the content of words such as these could be the fruit of a sick mind which suffers from delirious megalomania. The unfolding of these events however has given evidence of the complete solidity of Jesus sayings. In the course of time, year after year, century after century, the words uttered by Jesus have been precisely fulfilled. Time has consumed inumerable nations and fortresses, kingdoms and institutions, glories and civiliations which seemed imovable forever; His words however have remained eternal and fertile. The teeth of the ages, instead of grinding His words down, has polished them, solidified and smoothed them giving them indestructable strength and dazzling brilliance. From the beginning, Jesus through His utterances could have sounded like a lunatic who suffered from grandious delirousness but with time and fulfillment proved that He is divinity incarnate; this is so because only a God could speak this way without contradicting Himself, undergirding His unequaled glory in the eyes of posterity instead of being overcome by ridcule or compromising Himself beyond repair. And behold how these sayings of His which could seem like those of a lunatic come to prove exactly His divinity.[4]

Jesus therefore came to fulfull what no one else was able to do. In this context, the road to the cross was nothing less than an exact fulfillment of the divine plan. All at once with the incarnation of Jesus, the Kingdom of God ceased being strictly geographic and became

established in the hearts of those who believe and were ready to follow Jesus. Speaking about the goal of Jesus' first coming to earth, Charles R. Swindoll writes:

> Jesus clearly understood his purpose for coming to the world and never allowed popularity, success, opposition, threats or even misunderstanding around Him to distract Him. He remained focused on His mission although never without caring for the people around Him. He strove to present the truth in the simplest way. Time after time He called people to embrace the truth. But He never allowed the failures of others to knock Him off of his course.[5]

The historian Kenneth Scott Latourette writes: *"With the passing of the ages, more and more proof has come together regarding the fact that according to the effect that He has had in history, Jesus lived the most influential life among those who have ever lived on this planet and this effect appears to be growing."*[6] For his part, Ernest Renan makes the following affirmation regarding Jesus: *"Jesus was the greatest religious genius who ever lived. His beauty is eternal and his dominion will have no end. Jesus is unique in every sense and nothing can be equal to Him. All of history is inconceivable without Christ."*[7]

The affirmations that Christ made about Himself identifies Him as being more than just a simple teacher or even a prophet. He openly made the claim to be God, the only way to the Father, the only one who could forgive sin as well as the only Mediator of salvation. For many, these affirmations seemed to be blasphemious to God and because of this were not inclined to accept them. F.J.A. Hort writes: *"His words were in a sense an expression of Himself, in such a way that they would make no sense if they were seen as abstract affirmations of a divine oracle or just coming from a prophet. Remove Him from being the main subject (or the ultimate subject) of each affirmation and all of these collapse into nonsense."*[8] Kenneth Scott Latourette on the other hand points out the following about Jesus claims:

> It is not just the teachings of Jesus that make him so remarkable, although these would be sufficient to give Him this distinction. It is the combination of the teaching and the Man himself.

These two factors cannot be separated. . . . It must be evident to any attentive reader of the Gospels that Jesus considered His message and Himself to be inseparable. He was a great teacher but He was more than that. His teachings about the Kingdom of God, human behavior and the nature of God were important. But these were not capable of being separated from His person, without being—from His perspective—completely vitiated.[9]

Resuming the affirmations regarding Jesus, as well as emphasizing His work, the Apostle John writes*: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* (John 20:31) NIV. With certainty the life, work and teaching of Jesus were found to be in major conflict with the messianic speculations of the Jews in that day.

Being instructed from childhood that when the Messiah comes He will be a political leader who will bring liberty to the people by restoring Israel to it's once held greatness, their hope began to be rekindled with the coming of Jesus on the scene. The expectation of an eliberator was without doubt intensified by the events which took place at that time. This was especially true when Jewish freedom was being stomped out by the repressive measures of the increasingly numerous Romans. In this context, a suffering Messiah was a completely foreign concept to the Jews. As Millard Burrows comments however: "Jesus was so different than what the Jews expected in the Son of David that even His disciples encountered difficulties in associating the person of Jesus with their own ideas about the Messiah."[10]

This was one of the reasons that the apostles abandoned Him when He was arrested. Their minds were so deeply steeped in the idea of a conquering Messiah who's role was to defeat their enemies that when they saw Jesus beaten and bloody after being tortured—a helpless prisoner in Pilate's hands—and when they saw how He was treated by the Roman soldiers and held by the cross to die as an ordinary criminal, all of their Messianic hopes regarding Jesus were shattered.[11]

With all of this, in a very short time after Jesus' crucifixion and ressurection and in spite of their initial doubts and disappointments, the disciples boldly proclaimed Jesus as Lord and Savior. What exactly brought about such a change? With certainty, the fact that: *"After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God"* (Acts 1:3) NIV was the major factor. Meeting with the risen Christ convinced His followers that He was truly the Messiah, the divine solution for the human problem. This caused them to testify to this fact not only through their powerful messages and transformed lives but even through their deaths.

Christ was, is and shall remain therefore the most influential person in history, the divine solution for the human problem.[12] Now more than ever is the need for a clear understanding of the Person and work of our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. The life of Jesus may be defined by supernatural works, wisdom and astonishing sayings, immeasurable love, perfect life, supreme sacrifice—all offering a unique hope.

Unfortunately the sacrifice of Jesus Christ together with all of its implications continues to be largely associated with a nice myth, an unrighteous act, an abstract and mystical reality without having any resonance to the level of mind or heart. For those who condemned Him, the death of Christ was seen as a necessity. This was so because to them He was considered a heretic, blasphemer, possessed, both dangerous for different religious groups as well as the Roman rule. Also for those nearer to Christ, He was considered a victim of a mockery of due process and of clergical conspiracy. For others however, Christ was a martyr who sacrificed himself as a inspiring example. Still for everyone Christ was and remains the divine solution for the human problem.

The teaching of Christ portrays itself as having an unnatural ethic and in so doing seems to be sentenced to never bear fruit. To everyone's surprise however, the teachings of Christ have overcome and are spreading more and more. Drawing from His teaching it can be said that: To the man who desires pleasure Jesus recommends curbing his appetite; to the one enslaved to material goods He speaks

of the uselessness of earthly treasures; to those who are controlled by the instinct to dominate, the Savior shows them the greatness of humility; to the man given to react under instinctive impulses in order to take the law into his own hands by paying evil with the same, Christ speaks to him about Christian love which is manifested in a concrete way and not simply theoretically.

Reading through this article, you might get the impression that you find yourself in the midst of a few moral ideas which are in flagrant contradiction with the laws of human nature. But on the other hand:

> If Jesus was only an expression of a moment in history, states Sterie Diamandi, two things would have been necessary to have happened: 1. In the passing of time, there would have had to appear a number of heroes just like Jesus because to various degrees there was an urgently felt need for saviors. 2. With Jesus being the expression of but a moment of history it would have been logical for Him to disappear all at once with the need that He created, limited in His influence by space and time.[13]

In the case of Jesus Christ however, the exact opposite happened. In the course of history Jesus' was and remains a unique advent. Concerning this matter, Ernest Renan says: *"Without Him all of history is without meaning. Whatever the unexpected fenomenon of the future might be, Jesus will never be surpassed. Every age will proclaim that among the sons of men none has come along who is greater than Jesus."*[14] With respect to Jesus, Straus point out that:

> In no way and in no time will it be possible for someone to rise up above Him and it is not even possible for us to imagine anyone who could be His equal. The passing of time can never cause Jesus to become outdated because He is always alive and present, His influence not being dependent upon time and space. His image constantly serves mankind as a guide for life like the North Star which acts as a point of orientation. That is why He is more than necessary for mankind, He is indespenible.[15]

Seeing how all of this comes together, it can be affirmed with all confidence that whatever man may do without in this world, one thing he cannot do without is Jesus Christ. Without Him mankind would regress two thousand years. The twenty centuries which have passed since His incarnation have done nothing but further his greatness and brilliance. Instead of supressing His authority or diminishing his influence, the passing of time has done nothing but add more to His importance. The vast horizon that history offers, unfurls Jesus matchless moral greatness as dominating all the sunbathed pinnacles in the regions of mankind's spirituality.[16] Christ was, is and remains therefore the divine solution for the human problem.

NOTES

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[2] Robert Bowman & J.Ed. Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 17.

[3] Luke 5:17–21, 7:36–49, 9:7–9, etc.

[4] Sterie Diamandi, *Fiul lui Dumnezeu—Fiul Omului ** Activitatea şi învăţătura* (tr. *The Son of God—The Son of Man ** Activity and Teaching*), (Editura „Cartea Românească", Bucureşti, 1943), 258.

[5] Charles R. Swindoll, *Cel mai mare om din istorie, Isus (tr. Jesus, the Greatest Man in History)*, (Societatea Biblică din România, Oradea, 2011), 156.

[6] Kenneth Scott Latourette in Josh McDowell, *Mai mult decât un simplu tâmplar)*, 5.

[7] Ernest Renan in Josh McDowell, Mai mult decât un simplu tâmplar (tr. More than a Carpenter), 5

[8] F.J.A. Hort, *Way, Truth and the Life*, (New York, MacMillan and Co., 1894), 207.

[9] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, (New York, Harper and Row, 1953), 44

[10] Millard Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Londra, Secker & Warburg, 1958), 68.

[11] George Eldon Ladd, *I Believe in the Resurrection of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), 38.

[12] Ioan–Gheorghe Rotaru, "Iată Omul—Iisus Hristos !" *Argeşul Ortodox*, Curtea de Argeş, XI, 563 (2012), 5.

[13] Sterie Diamandi, *Fiul lui Dumnezeu—Fiul Omului ** Activitatea şi învăţătura*, (Editura „Cartea Românească", Bucureşti, 1943), 253–254.

[14] Ernest Renan, în Sterie Diamandi, *Fiul lui Dumnezeu—Fiul Omului ** Activitatea şi învăţătura*, 254.

[15] Sterie Diamandi, *Fiul lui Dumnezeu—Fiul Omului ** Activitatea şi învăţătura*, 254.

[16] Sterie Diamandi, *Fiul lui Dumnezeu–Fiul Omului ** Patimile, Moartea, Învierea*, (Editura „Cartea Românească", Bucureşti, 1943), 416.

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The Failure of the 'Mosaism' Project: What Happens When Politics and Self–Centrism Mixed With Religion

Cosmin Tudor Ciocan

ABSTRACT: Unlike the official ratio between Christianity and Mosaism, where Christianity is considered the offspring of Mosaism, I reconsider this position based on facts and prophecies told in Bible which prove that OT has to be distinguished in two separate realities: the genuine 'voice of God' expressed in prophecies and Decalogue, and the religiousness of Jewish people affected by the Egyptian exodus, by time, social context, ego and nationalism, religious background inherited from Mesopotamia and Egypt, and so forth. The context of Mosaic's birth created the confusion that all what is written in Old Testament is the will of God, including crimes/violence, and that has led to many denials of the Old Testament, in spite of the strong relation between Old and New Testament. By separating the realities of Christ/Apostles and Prophets from the religion of Israel found in Bible, I hope to prove that, from the beginning, Yahweh separates His prophets from the people of Israel/priests for their stubbornness in listening Him, with the claim that Mosaism grew apart from Prophetism.

KEY WORDS: prophetism, religiousness, situatedness, covenant, obedience, faithfulness

Introduction[1]

The general view about Christianism in relation with Mosaism is always based on the ratio between Old and New Testaments and

it follows same routine, that *Christianism is the continuer of Mosaism for the fact that everything reveled by God in the Old Testament is in fact done as a preparation for receiving a New Testament.* . . . However, it was ever conceived that these two assertions can be thought separately so that the later does not have to depend on the former? Without considering this as a premise, I've ended thinking to it when, for the reason of publishing this chapter of my next book on religiousness, I had to make an introduction to it. Reading all the arguments that *came* into my mind in a rush it is now so obvious that the religion of Jews has started on the wrong foot and it has promoted many values that had nothing to do with revelation, but it was assumed to be revealed by God to Moses and later *shoftim* (judges) of Israel, but in fact, as we can see in my whole dissertation here, were not 'a will of God–Yahweh,' since He denies them through the voices of later prophets. That and many practices Jewish people have used from the beginning of his religion, made me decide that such violent and discordant 'image of a god' drawn in OT cannot be the same with that revealed through prophets and later through Christ. The method for considering all that with an open–mind has to be the concept of 'situatedness,'[2] one that allows us to see every movement, reform, or even religion as a current raised against something in the human society as well as a step forward in building an understanding over Mosaism under the circumstances they had when started it. So, in conclusion, I can consider this paper my response to prof. Diane Moore (HDS) question, *How does your own "situatedness" shape your view [over religion of OT]?*

A. The Ratio of Savior Christ with the Old Testament

1. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. . . . I am God—yes, I Am. I haven't changed . . . I will not change my plans" (Hebrews 13:8; Malachi 3:6; Amos 2:1; Ps. 110:4)

2. "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17)

3. *"You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'You shall*

. . . But I say to you . . . (something else) (Matthew 5:21–22 corres. Ex. 20:13; 27–28 corres. Ex. 20:14; 31–32 corres. Dt. 24:1–5; 33–37 corres. Leviticus 24:20; 38–39 corres. Leviticus 19:18)

How do we suppose to understand these declarations of the Son of God, seen in their continuity, 1–2–3? If the decisions and plans of God are eternal and they cannot be changed over time through the resignificance made by certain human or non-human interventions, this is just one of the divine immutability characteristics. At the same time, however, *God's plan* does not include premeditated fluctuations either, conflicting stages planned from eternity that are met over time (in creation) and occur as such, seemingly conflicting from the perspective of human understanding. It has a natural fluency, perhaps even natural predictable in regard of its purpose (the salvation of creation), not necessarily on the details of the path towards this end. He is unchanged in his love. He has loved his people with "an everlasting love" he loves them now as much as he ever did, and when all earthly things shall have melted in the last conflagration, his love will still wear the dew of its youth.[3]

And then, if we understand the divine inflexibility, how should we consider Christ's divine interventions on the Old Testament Law (3) if they are foreshadowed by the assertion (2)? For me it is clear that the two refers to two different realities, non-coincidental, occurring in the same civilization, in the same religious reality seemingly overlapped, but in reality they are two, numerical and topological, and Christ addresses them both by turn, demonstrating how He relates to them. First, He discusses the divine law directly revealed, indisputable and externally unaltered, to humans in general, but by Jews led by Moses in particular, under the sway of history.

The fact that Christ proves Himself 'above the Law,' as one who is the legislator himself, one who knows best what He meant and what have been His intentions when he gave these laws, is very well entrenched in the mind of Jews who had followed Him, ordinary people, uncorrupted by preconceptions formulated and professed by the Jewish religion. Some of them practitioners, others just ordinary followers, all the apostles prove to be people with an unfinished religious status, people who have not reached religious

maturity, especially theological, which give to their Master the possibility of telling them exactly how things are conceived in God's mind, without having to face the barrier of Jewish religion patterns that operates much diverted from initial concept, first revealed and then held in parallel to the Judaism by Prophetism.

B. The Ratio Between Prophetism and Judaism

A prophetic intervention of Christ over one of His apostles proves this predilection for people of sincere, honest and pre–judgmentless character. When introduced to the Son of God, Nathanael was presented by Him as "a true Israelite. There is no duplicity in him"[4] (Matthew 1:47)—a commentary referring to the deceiving and duplicity of Israel, the historical figure unlike his father, Abraham, the one due to whom God made His covenant with man—Genesis 27:35–36. For people uncorrupted by the stubbornness and hard–neck–ness of Mosaism is the Christ's offer of a new Kingdom referring to. The new covenant of God with mankind is not based on the same ground as the first one but with same purpose. In the first place the old covenant aimed Abraham and his selfless faith, and being one among the few people inhabiting Earth at that moment, he was chosen of all people as an anchor for saving what is left of humanity. Due to the fact that he was special for his firm, unshakeable belief in the real God, he proved that mankind is not irremediably doomed to perish, so God used him of all to create a pattern, a right way of knowing, meeting and serving the Creator and Savior; this was the reason for his election. Now, after people had their time to find out more about divinity and what are the reasons for creating the world and mankind, after the aisle in history created by Judaism, in its humanly, corrupted but still God–loving way, a new, true and definitive covenant has to be made. It was possible that the first project to fail—and this failure was not far from the truth, but possibly God wasn't looking at the Judaism failure as human religiousness, but for its success in protecting and raising man's desire to know, meet and follow the Messiah. *Judaism was not the point of the old covenant*, in fact it

was known from the beginning that they is an impossible mission, to make people love the One, true God as Abraham did, without grumbling and complaining, without remorse and disclaimers as Jews did from the start. That was the reason for them to receiving the *circumcision*, as a sign of their covenant with the Lord and a reason for being set apart from all others for Him. The Israelites were required to undergo the rite of circumcision (Gen 17:10–14), but more than that, as metaphor for stubbornness of heart, it was an act of yielding obedience. But Yahweh saw in Jews a hard–necked people, unworthy of their father's blessing and covenant, for even physically circumcised Israelites could still be considered "uncircumcised." In Leviticus 26:41 Yahweh promises to listen and restore the Israelites if *they humble their uncircumcised heart* (*levavam he'arel*; with the adjective *arel*). This spiritual meaning was more important than the bodily aspect (John 4.14) that's why centuries in a row prophets were picked and sent to Jews to reconnect with initial plan, with the very reason they became chosen for.

1. Prophethood in Opposition to Religious–political Jewish Project

Besides, Prophethood in general was established as a divine intervention to get people on the right track for their religiousness; it has always proved two things: first that God didn't abandoned man, and second that man is doing something wrong, unwanted by God, that this way of religiousness is misplaced, incompatible with God's will or plan. *Prophetism worked from the beginning of Mosaism as part of it—when religious manifestation and tribal identity were one—and it became obsolete when those two passed into two different realities*. The mixture of politics and eager to conquering 'a special legacy' with religious belief make the voices of prophets [i.e. voice of Yahweh] unwanted; "As for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we are not going to listen to you!" (Jeremiah 44:16). In the *Book of Judges* a cyclical pattern is recounted to show the various reasons for the need of judges: the apostasy of the Israelite people, the hardship

brought on as punishment from God, the crying out to the Lord for rescue, etc.

The *judges* (*shoftim*) were the successive individuals, each from a different tribe of Israel, '*chosen by God* to rescue the people from their enemies' and establish justice and the practice of the Torah amongst Hebrews. While they played the role as officials with the authority to administer justice serving mostly the will of political leaders, they were thought of as *being sent by God to deliver the people from a threat. But their role grew apart from Prophetism due to the implication of politics.* How can we see that coming when the Bible says otherwise, that *shoftim* were executing Yahweh's demands and will? For instance, comparing with a similar case, when Abraham became aware of God's plan to destroy the infidel cities of Sodom and Gemorrah, what did he do? One would have perhaps thought that Abraham would have celebrated the annihilation of the non-believers, the apostates and the sinners. But no! We are told—and you can read it in Quran too—that Abraham prayed for them, beseeching God to spare the city in merit of the righteous people that may live there! So, the path of engaging nonbelievers was different in the eyes of Abraham, the one man who is declared 'friend of God' and 'the father of many nations' (James 2:23; Gen. 17:5) for his strong belief and love for God. In comparison to what happened after ending the desert Journey of Sinai, we see that the *friendship with God* was a statement made by God himself, not a self-reflection, while the *judges and kings later of Israel* were pronounced by people or by religious leaders as 'elected by God', sometimes at their command and even against God's will (1 Samuel 11:1–7; 16:1; 8:1–9).

Then the will of God and His action were no longer enjoyed my Jews—in fact it never was, judging from their apostasy since the Sinai mountain and their grumbling against Yahweh and His prophet, Moses, several times in the desert (Ex. 16:6, 8, 9, 12 et.al.). It was obvious that Jews were uncircumcised, unwilling to give up their plans for God's; that is why religion and tribal policy have grown separately and eventually religion ended up following more the tribal policy then the will of Yahweh. There was nothing else to show God's will but the prophets, unfollowed, not listened and many times even killed for their attempt to 'corrupt' religious Jews from their religious path. "The Lord said [to the prophet Samuel]: Listen

to whatever the people say. You are not the one they are rejecting. They are rejecting Me as their king. They are acting toward you just as they have acted from the day I brought them up from Egypt to this very day, deserting Me to serve other gods." (1 Samuel 8:7–8). Almost every prophet has ever since pointed Jews' religiousness as wrong and corrupted by their tribal policy and selfishness. Jeremiah, for example, describes their spiritual condition as an inability to listen, "Behold, their ears are uncircumcised (*aral*) they cannot listen; behold, the word of the Lord is to them an object of scorn; they take no pleasure in it" (Jer 6:10 ESV). Yet, in anticipating the new covenant, Moses declares, "Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise (*mul*) your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live" (Deut 30:6 corres. Mark 12:33 NAS).

2. Divine 'revealed' Commandments Were Actually Mimetic Forms of Behavior

The 'growing apart' of Judaism from Prophetism is underlined in many passages of the OT prophetic intervention. Their religiousness was deliberately otherwise from God's wish, following a different pattern, one that they have learned from pagans, not from Yahuwah's prophets—"Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked, each one, in the stubbornness of his evil heart; therefore I brought on them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but they did not." (Jeremiah 11:8) Many of their religious rituals and 'divine regulations' were in fact a legacy of their living among pagans, not a reveled will of Yahweh, e.g. sacrifices, killing people for various reasons (from conquering the *promised land* to *the punishment of God by stoning.*[5]) The later practice, stoning (saqal; λιθαζω lithazo), was presented to the Bible's readers as Yahweh's intervention over those who break His covenant and Law for divers 'sins'[6] mostly theological in nature. They include apostasy from Yahweh (Dt. 13:11 = 17:5), blasphemy God (Lev. 24:14,16,23; 1 K. 21:10–14; cf. 2 Ch. 24:21), *touching Mount Sinai while God was giving Moses the Ten Commandments, (Ex. 19:13), transgressing a taboo commandment (Josh. 7:25), Breaking Sabbath, (Nu. 15:32–36); Homosexual practices (Leviticus*

20:13); "Rebellion" against parents, after repeated warnings (Deut. 21:18–21); extramarital sex (Deut. 22:23–24; Ezk. 16:40; 23:47); deceiving to be a virgin at wedding (Deut. 22:13–21), etc.,—"Then *the Lord said* to Moses, Certainly the man is to be put to death: let him be stoned by all the people outside the tent–circle." (Numbers 15:35). These words, putted with a certain intention into Yahweh's account, was in fact a practice Jews have seen it long before so-called *God's punishment*,[7] during Mesopotamia,[8] Egypt,[9] and lands in-between from where the practice escaladed to all ancient world, as the most cruel punishment and to–teach–lesson for villains. The reason Jews—from Moses till the days of Christ—used it was to create a scary image of God, one that does not accept denial and infringement of the law, "God—his name is The–Jealous–One—is a jealous God." (Exodus 34:14) Protected by this cruel, ready–to–punish God, any religious leader could demand anything from the people, for they were controlled by fear. The OT use of "fear" often indicates awe or reverence. To fear God is to express loyalty to Him and faithfulness to His covenant. Those who fear God exhibit trust in Him and obedience to His commandments. According to the OT, those who fear God obtain God's protection, wisdom, and blessing. That was easy to be transferred to the political desire of land conquering by redirecting the Yahweh's fierceness upon Jews' enemies and so raising Jews' will. "Don't be intimidated by them. God, your God, is among you—God majestic, God awesome. God, your God, will get rid of these nations, bit by bit." (Deut. 7:21–24). But regarding this through the words said by later prophets and Christ is obvious that everything was just a psychological shield of control and encouragement to battle. There are several examples when people of Israel used stoning as their own purpose, not because 'God commands it'. Besides the example of Moses, scared to be stoned by his kin for telling the will of Yahweh to cross the desert of Sinai, we can see that this habit was used by Egyptians and many other tribes in the region and not a genuine Jewish religious outfit. (Ex. 8:26)

Also David, God's elected to become king, puts his hope in God when threaten to be stoned by people "*because the soul of all the people was grieved*, every man for his sons and for his daughters:

but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God." (1 Samuel 30:6)

It is more obvious to understand this separation of Mosaism from the God's revealed will when we see in the prophets' pronouncements that, besides *stoning*, another key-concept of their religion, *sacrifices*, was not commanded by God—"For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Jeremiah 7:22; also see same statement at Hosea 6:6; 1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 40:6; Psalm 51:16–17). After making the statement that He did not commanded the burnt offerings or sacrifices after setting Jews out from Egypt, God says *"However, I did give them this command: Obey Me, and then I will be your God, and you will be My people. You must walk in every way I command you so that it may go well with you. But they didn't listen, nor did they pay attention. They pursued their own plans, stubbornly following their own evil desires. They went backward and not forward. From the day your ancestors left the land of Egypt to this present time, I've sent all my servants, the prophets, to you, again and again. But they didn't listen to me, and they didn't pay attention. They stiffened their necks, and they did more evil than their ancestors."* (Jeremiah 7:23–26 corres. Isaiah 1:11 ISV). This is a statement not easy to accept and digest by religious leaders that build a whole religious structure upon offerings, obedience to rules imposed as divine and now denied even by God!

After his life-altering vision of the Lord, Isaiah accepts God's call and receives his commission: "And [the Lord] said, 'Go, and say to this people: "Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive." Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.'" (Isa 6:9–10 ESV) In verse 10, Isaiah describes *this spiritual condition metaphorically* through the physical organs of sense: *the heart* (*lev*) *has grown dull* (literally "fat" *shamen*), *the ears* (*ozen*) *are heavy* (*kaved*) *and the eyes* (*ayin*) *are dim* (*sha'a'*). The prophet constructs the verse in such a fashion as "to underscore (1) the finality of the condition, namely, spiritual impotence

and unresponsiveness; and (2) the comprehensiveness of the condition. Every organ of potential divine–human communication is malfunctioning."[10] This metaphor for the spiritual condition in which were regarded not only the Jews themselves, but also their way of expressing religiousness, decadent and self–centered, making the prophets even refuse to be asked for a divine point of view (Jonah). Many times prophets' opinion didn't matter at all for being against people's or king's wish (1 Kings 22:8, "[king of Israel] answered 'There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, Micaiah the son of Imlah, but *I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me, but evil.*'"), and soon prophets become obsolete even for religious people and their leaders, leading to their rejection, from exile to killing (Matthew 23:31; Luke 20:45–47 corres. 2 Chronicles 24:20).

Another element I would like to relate to is the way all prophets address in their books when speaking about Jewish people. They never identify themselves with Jews; always speak on third–person plural in regard of their fellow countrymen, *this people* (Ex. 5:22; 17:4; 18:18; 32:22; Num. 14:15 et.al.). In return God also use the same form of addressing, *you and this people* (Ex. 17:4; Num. 14:11; Deut. 31:16; 1 Kgs 12:10 et.al.). By this *third–person plural* formula a distance is specially created with one single purpose: avoiding identification and joint combination. And who would want this artificial distance to be raised between him and the persons he is addressing of, unless he strongly disagrees with their way of acting, thinking, behaving, etc.? "So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he said, 'Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice.'" (Judges 2:20)

C. Christ Relating with Mosaism . . . continuation

It is more than obvious that a gap grew deep between Yahweh and his elected people, since God reacts always without pleasure in relation with Jewish people in general and He says through his prophets that He "will keep His promise for I gave to your fathers"

(1 Kings 6:12; Jeremiah 29:10) and not because you deserve it. God feels the need to express this negative sentiment he has for Jews due to their constant injustice and duplicity, saying either that '*I will give up on account of the sins and the LORD will strike Israel*' (1 Kings 14:15–16), or, when continues to take care of Jews for the sake of few, that '*He does that for the promise He made to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*' (Deut. 9:5), somehow forced, unwillingly. But precisely that's why the Apostles of Jesus–Son of God emphasis that Jews haven't received the promise made to Abraham for they have not followed their father in his belief (Hebrews 11:13). St. Paul embraces John's assertion that "For while the Law was given through Moses, grace (unearned, undeserved favor and spiritual blessing) and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17), and underlines that idea that made Christianity a far more spiritual and intimate religion: "No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by God's Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people. . . ." (Rom. 2:29; 2:27; Philip. 3:3 cf. Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4).

1. Law or Faith?

Christ has tried to make Jews being aware that the sacred Law given to them through Moses was good, an actual pattern of knowing and serving God, but they got it all wrong. He underlines the fact that who's close to God, does His work and stays connect to Him in his heart, does not need for a specific Law to obey; he does that by love, unconditionally. "For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the Law, but through the righteousness produced by faith" (Romans 4:13) that is why who loves God is above the Law, because the Law was given for those who did not love, for their correction and help in getting things right (Romans 4:2–5, 9–11). St. Paul dedicates many chapters to clarify this crucial issue, the ratio between Law/nonbelievers and Grace/God–loving–persons. "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested

apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe." (Romans 3:20,21 et.al.)

2. Reasons for giving the Law and its effects on People

So, the ratio of Christ with Old Testament's Law proves that this was given to people for their wrong behavior, as a pattern to know the truth, to serve God in case they want to. At the same time the Law is not given to those who believe, for their praiseworthy conduct and relationship with God. At the same time the Law is and isn't given to those who believe. On the one hand, it is given to them for their confidence in God, as a sign of recognition that they worth having a revelation from God. That is why the circumcision was given to Abraham with the covenant but without a Law, for the faith he had in God before that. On the other hand, the Law does not have them as target, it isn't given for them to accomplish, to reach the state of following God, since they already do this; they are not Law's intention, but those who have not reached this state.

But for those with bad conduit, without a proper way to live, for transgressors and God's offenders, for villains, in order to "make men recognize and be conscious of *sin*" (Romans 3.20 AMP).[11] It serves for two purposes: (1) as a base for judgement over villains, and (2) a pattern for when/if they stop living in a sinful way and repent.

(1) The *legal side*: In the absence of law there is no possibility for someone *to know sin*, therefore he cannot be judged. "In fact, sin was in the world before the law, but sin is not charged to one's account when there is no law." (Rom. 5:13 HCSB)[12] Thus, God needed to give man the Law, so that He can punish those who infringed the Law, after that without any exoneration. "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin. Now they have no excuse for their sin." (John 15:22 HCSB). It is evident that the Law was given in order to set juridical terms of life and conduct.

(2) The *pedagogical* side: "[if you claim to] know His will and approve the things that are essential or have a sense of what is excellent, based on your instruction from the Law" (Rom. 2:18 AMP). The Law was a good pattern for understanding how you

can behave in a way you make God proud of you. Offering such a pattern was easier for everyone; you don't have to think on what you have to do to make God proud of you, you just have to listen. So, in this case, obeying is the right alternative to faithfulness; either you believe and love God with your life, or by being obedient in every situation of life, have the same end, *entrust God with your life*, praising Him with your doings.

In return, *what were the effects on people when God gave them the Law?* Or rather, *what was the true meaning of 'giving' the Law on behalf of God, what He intended to do by that?* From the Christ's words the meaning is (2), to *reveal*, to uncover, to give a path, while from the OT perspective is aiming exclusively to (1), to discover the sinners (Romans 5:20, "The Law was given so that the trespass would increase.") But this is only a matter of perspective, based on the divinity of Christ, not an internal contradiction; it is not a new way of deciphering the Law of God, but the Way for it. (John 14:6) In fact, the intention was always the same, it certainly looks like a contradiction because while in NT God Himself speaks, in the canon of OT, the whole intention is displayed to us from Jews' perspective. The entire revelation of God is written under the situatedness of Jewish already formed religiousness. That is why they just cannot get rid of fear of gods, making sacrifices to appeasing them, and all these feelings and ideas inherited from locals and neighbors drove them to do the same with Yahweh. For them, any god imprints in his followers his will and since circumcision looks the same, like a branding, they interpreted Yahweh's intention in kind and wrote His 'revelation' under these strong emotions. That is the reason why the God's 'words' written by Jews are full of wrath and anger, and yet He speaks so kind and charming in NT—"I don't call you servants anymore, because a servant doesn't know what his master is doing. But I've called you friends, because I've made known to you everything that I've heard from my Father." (John 15:15)

Thus, the effects over people who received the Law were bicephalous: as an instinct for those who are *afraid* of the law–giver, people were scared in the beginning, living a state of *denial* (same as Adam or Cain, Gen. 3:8; 4:9), 'I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid [*Yare'*, fear, afraid, terrible, fearful]' (Gen. 3:10 KJV).

Then, discovering that the law is against whatever they must've been doing/thinking/planning to do, didn't enjoyed this anymore than any man forced to leave his old habits and become otherwise overnight. More than that, let picture that this person is told that everything he believed in is wrong and he has to deny it and obey to a new, partially revealed and completely personal–engaging way of religiousness. How can he react to that? Forced to do it, he will bear the remorse and second–thoughts at all time. He might not say it lauder, but he will certainly express it every time he has an opportunity; that is what was been displayed in Jewish history ever since they've been taken by force out from Egypt. Therefore, along with this attitude of discomfort, comes the Law that tends to replace the love and trust in God, those feelings Abraham had when he unconditionally left Mesopotamia and for that reason he had no need to receive a law to create obedience. Instead now, after Egypt, things are not the same, and Abraham's descendants—for whom the promises were made to their father—needed a way to find the itinerary of Abraham to the oak of Moreh (Gen 12:6), the encounter with God. But giving the law had also the possibility of failure included in. Therefore, there is no way the Law intends to be placed above the belief in God and the pure love and trust in Him; "For in the gospel God's righteousness is being revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, 'The righteous will live by faith.'" (Rom. 1:17)

There are only these two options for bringing the Law into discussion, and while the former gives only *the recognition of the sins, not also the power to overcome it* (Rom 8:3), the later provides *the pattern of serving God, still without the power to make you want it*, "since the Law was given through Moses and yet none of you keeps the law" (John 7:19). So, in the end, what was that Law really did? "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase" (Romans 5:20–21). These relations between entrusting believers and under–Law obeying people proves the perspective Christ–God has on the OT Law, for it has nothing to do with salvation; "for we hold that a man is justified and made upright by faith independent of and distinctly apart from good deeds (works of the Law)" (Rom. 3:28 AMP).

3. I Am Not Changing the Law!

I keep wondering if St. Paul had a reason when concluded, in a four–chapter speech on the relation between Christians and the Law [of Old Testament], saying "Do we, then, abolish the Law by this faith? Of course not! Instead, we uphold the Law" (Rom. 3:31) or not. And if he did, what was that? And then I saw a resemblance with the words of Christ in the same relation, Math. 5.17, only that their assertion had different position in the speech, therefore bearing a different message. While Paul's is almost like a conclusion, placed at the end of his speech, and even more like a precautionary measure for his listeners for not to be tempted to overcome the Law and to leave it aside of their lives, and thus ending a life after the will of God, the same statement is said by Christ, but this time in the introduction of all His preaching, in the beginning of His mission. *Unrelated*, these two same–statements were never other than parts of the same theological structure, giving to the auditorium same feeling on engaging the Law of OT from the same perspective, of continuity of obeying the rules of Mosaism. I had always listen sermons—even given by myself—about that passage, Math. 5:17, and the ratio of Christ with the Law of OT was always the same: Christ, as human as this text possibly make out of Him, obeying the Law Moses has gave to Jewish people. Now I feel that everybody is missing the whole point in this statement and now—I hope with God's help—it comes so clearly to me for obvious reasons that, in fact, things are completely different. In the first place, Christ couldn't start His mission of Savior, of Messiah, with a statement of obedience, and then, with all what He did, to contradict this obedience—*curing in the days of Sabbat, forgiving man's sins, abolishing sacrifices, stoning, unclean food, etc.*,— therefore, my assertion on these words of Christ is that He does not make an obedience statement, something like 'don't worry, I didn't come to replace the old Law and give you a new one, different or the same but a more simple one, so that His auditorium would not be stumble and leave the place. No, it has to be more than that. Christ wasn't apologizing what he intends to do later on. Also, He wasn't using this statement as a psychological excuse to relate His

whole new work with His predecessor, Moses, and gain trust from people so easy to peeve when picking on their religious views. In conclusion, this is not a precautionary measure statement coming from a human scared that he will be rejected by his kin and that He will have nobody to talk to afterwards. What is it then? In the light of this chapter and, mostly, related to St. Paul's same words, Christ's have a different position [in speech], message and intention. He leaves his humanly chores and start His mission as 'God among us' (corres. John 1:14). Hearing His words, from the beginning till the end, everybody acknowledge that they don't face a human, but someone different, as different as the One Abraham encountered when he has abandoned Mesopotamia, as Moses encountered in the burning bush and so on—"No man ever spoke like that! . . . His last, he said, "This man really was God's Son!" (John 7:46; Mark 15:39). So, that Jesus standing in front of Jews and talking about the OT Law streams differentness as the God of Abraham did, streams power of a God, of a Law–giver, not a Law–obeying person, 'They were utterly amazed at what he taught [διδαχή, doctrine], because his message was spoken with authority [weight and power]' (Lk. 4:32). In this case Christ's relation with the OT Law was not *to be under it*—as most sermons on Math. 5:17 are implying, considering that we don't need to put OT in opposition with NT, and Christ–God in opposition to Yahweh–God, and therefore loose the prophetical image of Messiah, the Messenger—but *above it*. Anyways, being 'above' continues to be wrong if we still consider Him as human; a human *above the Law* is nothing more than a villain, an outlaw and therefor he has to be a pariah, putted under the law and condemned by it. This was, in fact, the reason why Jews have come to convict and sentence Christ to death, because they considered him only human and His actions placed Him above the OT Law.

In this position, of the Lawgiver, same as for the Old Testament, Christ stands now in front of His people as He once did at Mt. Sinai and make those remarks on the Law (Math. 5:21–48), not replacing the OT law as thought by their religious leaders or by others which, considering that He came to make the Law even roughen, have ended in the same reaction as in OT: denying his authority and hating him for that (John 15:25, "They hated Me for no reason.") He did

those remarks only as annotations to the texts of the Law, for they misunderstood it from the beginning, got it all wrong and misplaced it in their religion, leading them to obey rules otherwise that it was intended to by God in the first place. Judaism came to be wrong in its understanding of *what God is* and *what is that He wants* from His followers to do. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD." (Isaiah 55.8) Ever since they misunderstood who is Yahweh in Sinai desert and misplaced His image with a golden bull, they went down on another road; for them 'religion' was no different from others, pagans as they call them. And this is not because of a 'little', 'harmless' mistake, that Yahweh could've get over it at Moses' prayers. (Ex. 32) After generations of pagan experience among Egyptians they could not pass *unharmed*, keeping Abrahamic faith untouched, that's why, when Yahweh chose Moses to get His people out of slavery and decided to grow a people of right religiousness, that people was unprepared, unwilling to reconnect with that strange, unseen, untouchable God Moses spoke about (book of Judith 8.14). Let's consider further this picture: Moses took them out of their homes, lead them into the desert for 40 years, without proper food and sometimes even water, chased by enemies and brought nearly to death for several times. On top of everything he gave the supreme Law, a Law of obedience, a law with so many Commandments that they couldn't even count, so strict and so precise that every step they took or action they made had a rule in detail; every step of their lives was taken by this Lawgiver and putted under the microscope to watch and manage. In this conditions, this *stiff–necked* people (Ex. 32:9, stubborn—*Qasheh*) turned their back to this undesirable image of God revealed by His prophet and grew a new, yet old one, more adequate to their needs and desire—of conquering and getting even to everybody who was to blame for their condition of outcasts. Yet Israel's house keeps saying, "The LORD isn't being consistent with his standards.' Is it my behavior that's inconsistent with my standards? Is it not your behavior that's inconsistent with my standards?" (Ezekiel 18:29) For how many times Yahweh is kept by prophets with prayers out of His wish to end and perish this untrusted nation and raise His children out of rocks!? (Math.

3:9, "don't presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones"). For more than the promises in OT come the regrets of Yahweh that *He came to know this people and aren't like their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,* and this state of stubbornness resists and perpetuates over centuries without any slit change, 'You stiff–necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit!' (Acts 7:51).

Comparing the words said to Abraham—"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because *you have obeyed My voice*" (Gen. 22.18)—with those addressed to Jews after Exodus—"I know your rebellion and your stubbornness; behold, while I am still alive with you today, *you have been rebellious against the LORD*" (Deut. 31:27)—we can understand the disappointment for He did so many great things among them that no one else ever did and still '*They refused* [refuse utterly] *to listen* [Shama`= to obey, obedient, diligent] and did not remember Your wonders You performed among them. They became stiff–necked [`oreph, stiffnecked] and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt.' (Nehemiah 9:17) That is why my assertion is that Mosaism grew apart from the revelation and from the real image of Yahweh revealed through prophets but unwanted by Jewish people for the lack of comfort and huge amount of liability He demands from his servants all the time, breakless. For this reason they chose to listen who ever speaks what they want instead of following the undesirable voice of the Lawgiver (2 Tim 4:3; Math. 15:14) and, in return, God left them in the hardness of their heart (Isaiah 63:17) till they will clean their hearts to *see* Him as truly is (Math. 5:8).

That is why Christ is not a lawgiver of a new Law, even if that could be a better one. His correct words (Math. 26:28) cannot refer to 'a new Law' for He does not give another Law, convicting the old one of imprecision, mistakes or outdated. He did a new covenant indeed, with people who embrace his words and raises a new religion, because the OT religion was outdated and full of human errors leading to a wrong image of God. *They misplaced the revealed image of God with the image they want Him to be for them,*

a vengeful one over all other humankind in order to make Jews rule on Earth. That is why Christ corrects this wrong image too and says that "My kingdom is not of this world" (Math. 18:36; 1 Chron. 17:14), and it is not taken by sword, but by another criteria— "Blessed are *the meek*: for they shall inherit the earth," (Math. 5:5) so that is what God really wants from His servants, not to be as Israel [the biblical person who was, duplicity and deceiving], but meek, gentle, poor in spirit. His attitude as Lawgiver goes beyond a simple correction of their religious misleading, and express His new attitude towards them "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will *produce* [ποιέω – *Poieo*, bring forth, commit, *perform*] the fruit of it." (Math. 21:43) That was the plan in the first place, same plan, and the covenant made by Yahweh with believing people, meek and eager to make sacrifices (as Abraham did, Gen. 22). But the idea of sacrifice grew wrong in the minds of Jews, for they were eager to sacrifice all others but themselves. So, instead of self–growing a people who serves the God of mercy, of love, and of care, they chose to serve a wrong image of Yahweh, no different from idols saw in Egypt, Mesopotamia and in between, and to use same method as the pagans were, sacrificing animals to be forgiven from their continue state of sinfulness. This way of religiousness was a cover for unwanted obedience: they make sacrifices of animals rather than their ego; they rather give up money or other goods than give up their wrong way of thinking, sinful and egocentric—"For I desire and delight in dutiful steadfast love and goodness, not sacrifice, and the knowledge of and acquaintance with God more than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6 AMP; Math. 9:13). God freed Jews from their oppressors and kindly conducted them to a land where they could have grown the seeds of Yahweh's good will; the promise was for real that they will be led to a land they will inherit and that God will be there with them to help them conquer that land and protect them from horrible engagements with locals (Gen. 28:15; 31:3; Ex. 3:12; Isa 43:2; Matt 28:20). But Jews understood this at their will, making a warrior out of Yahweh and have served Him as weapon against locals; it was a battle between tribes with strong will of conquering the land of Canaan—and still is!—forgetting the fact

that the promise of conquering Canaan was never about weapons and murders. The very event of rescuing Jews from Egypt shows the divine concept of protection He would offer to those who He elects and uses as envoys into the pagan world; Jews didn't have to draw swords and fight with Egyptians, instead they were protected by the mighty Yahweh in a different, providentially way. "I will help you conquer all the lads" is no different from the promise "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Math. 28:28, 29)

4. Obedience for the Law or Faithfulness to God?

The obedience for Judaism was denounced by Apostles for that specific reasons, namely that this religion was incapable to forgive sins and "yet we know that a person is not justified by doing what the Law requires, but rather by the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah" (Galatians 2:16). That is why the great debate between St. Paul and St. Petrus ended in a council (50 AD) which pronounced the Mosaic failure and futility as religion (Acts 15:28–29; I Cor. 7:19), abolishing all its commandments for every people who want to enter Christianism. This abolishment of the Mosaic religion was not a humanly doing, but a decision taken by God and revealed to his true followers, a decision taken by God long ago, to not enjoy this religiousness, but only now confessed for he has to whom. Now, thanks to his Son's work among man, there are many people willing to listen to his voice ('But a voice from heaven answered a second time, 'What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy', Acts 11:9).

A question like this—*Obedience for the Law vs faithfulness to God?*—raises many unwanted debates if not explained properly. *How come can we put these two in opposite sides? Can be faithfulness to God opposed to the divine law?* Or rather, *is the Law of God inconsistent with faithfulness to God?* This kind of issue would bring more misunderstandings than actually are. But, to answer these, we probably have to settle first which is above which. Asking Jews about that, Jesus received always the same answer, the Law.

According to their religious leaders no one and nothing is above the Law for it brings the *faithfulness to God*. In this regard they leave every other principles, human or other, they have to obey no matter what; God himself if would like to intervene into Jewish life, have to do it accordingly. "We have *a law*, and according to that law He ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God." (John 19:7). But they forgot one thing, "he [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision, *a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised*, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them," (Rom. 4:14) and it was his faithfulness to God that brought everything after: the covenant, the promise land, the Law and the mark of all these promises, the circumcision (Gen. 17:10, 12; Joshua 5), and not the other way around. And because the intention ruined the meaning, God descended to his people to let them know that are mistaken the faithfulness with obedience, and when He speaks to Jews he bring forward the hierarchy of things, "I assure you: A slave is not greater than his master, and a messenger is not greater than the one who sent him." (John 13:16) That is why, when coming to His people, they haven't recognized Him (John 1:11), for they were not looking to fulfilling the word of God and couldn't have recognize whoever speaks the will of God, for they were chasing another will, of a wrong religious one.

In order to make Jews figure that they should not have put the o*bedience for the Law* above *the faithfulness to God*, Jesus give them a parable, one about a man who planted a vineyard (Luke 20:9–16). To briefly understand the point of it, I said once to my flock that a king put a soldier to guard a flower and no one, under no circumstances, cannot touch it; after several persons who were rejected in their attempt to trespass, the king himself came and asked the soldier to step aside and let him pick up the flower. Now the soldier is in the same dilemma as ours: *to obey the law or to be faithful to his master*? That is why all the circumstances were against the religious path Jews slipped of and the conversion to the right path was near to impossible due to their `*oreph*, stiffneckedness, and unwillingness to change their path as shown for the beginning. The message coming from Yahweh through all his prophets was

always the same, 'Change your way, leave your path' (Jeremiah 26), but it is hard to leave whatever you've been doing as long as you don't listen, and you consider that you are doing the right thing.

> Your hearts are as hard as a field that has not been plowed. So change your ways and produce good crops. Do not plant seeds among thorns. People of Judah and Jerusalem, obey me. Do not let your hearts be stubborn. If you do, my anger will blaze out against you. (Jeremiah 4:3, 4)

What other proof for them being wrong do we need when they stick to a material object when praying, a wall, a coffin, rocks and other fabric, for saying their prayers, against they were taught (Lev. 26:1, 30), but the truth was always before them, that 'I am the sovereign God, . . . the whole world is Mine . . . and there is no other like ME in the whole world' (Gen 35:11; Ex. 19:5–23.22; Ex. 9:14), that is why Jesus came with the conclusion that "Believe Me, woman, an hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship Him" (John 4:21, 23) and for Him the only building we should build and see that is not ruined (Math. 7:26) is the Church, "a holy temple of the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:20–22) and that is a *spiritual building*, for it has our souls for fabric, "as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." (1 Pet. 2:4, 5) That is the reason why this new religion will never perish (Math. 16.18), for it doesn't rely on anything material, but directly in God and His Son, Christ, the real Temple (John 2:20, 21) and we are "builded up in him" (Col. 2:7).

5.The Judaism Trial is set for its dissolution

"I have no pleasure in them" (Ecclesiastes 12:1) The plan went wrong the first time, but being the plan of God, He never surrenders and capitulates, so He came again in order to set things right and re-build the Temple of spiritual relationship with mankind. Referring to the NT, many people—talking about the coming of Christ and

His work in relation with OT—say 'this time', as it is another plan, a change of plan, something like 'well, it didn't worked that way, so let's do it differently this time'. But, in fact, it isn't a change of plans from His behalf. It's only a matter of perspective; from Judaism's point of view things are pretty bad: someone comes to take away their religion, to throw it out as damaged, completely wrong, and *then what?* Since the vanity is too big (for humans in general) to accept they miss–take it, the plan fails again, in all its aspects. 'At least, *says the ego*, show us how to rebuild it, what is to be change!' But the answer is still: forget it, you have to change everything since nothing is in place with this religion. "Repent! Let there be no injustice; Change your ways! And your deeds" (Job 6:29; Jer. 7:4). It is needed for you to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may learn what the will of God is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect" (Rom. 12:2)

Coming back to the original plan, *inheriting the earth*, this wasn't in intention to be done by swords, but by love and care for others (Lev. 19:18), something like Abraham did for locals no matter how great were their sins (Gen. 18:23–32). Conquering the world had a single, spiritual aim and it didn't take into consideration the Jews but the praise of God—"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2.14). If they would have found out that this could be the intention and they would've praised the Lord within this aim— "And blessed be His glorious name forever; And may the whole earth be filled with His glory Amen" (Psalm 72:19; Isaiah 6:3), than *how could they believe that they will reach this goal fulfillment by killing all in their way, and those that they did not reach out, by ignoring and detesting them?* And again*, how can Jews reconcile the pity of God for all, lost and sinners (Ezekiel 18.23), with the words they supposed to be spoken by Yahweh when they have descended into Canaan, to kill everyone, even their own—"Moses told them, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Each of you, take your swords and go back and forth from one end of the camp to the other. Kill everyone—even your brothers, friends, and neighbors?'"* (Exodus 32:27) The answer is simple and more than obvious for they took their ideas and placed on God's mouth as 'revealed' to them, but the reality was that "As

for the message that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we are not going to listen to you!" (Jeremiah 44:16) In fact, His true revealed will wasn't about sacrificing animals, but that "you really change your ways and your actions, if you act justly toward one another." (Jer. 7:5) Many words are in flagrant contradiction one to each other in their attempt to shape the image of God; on the one hand is the image of a God feared and revengeful, and on the other hand the image of a loving God, image that transcends both Old and New Testaments. "You shall not take revenge or bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord." (Leviticus 19:18)

If the first image has the role of psychological protection and justification of all the violence and terror Jews have ever used in their attempt to take over Canaan, 'the promised land', the second one reveals another, peaceful aim of the elected people, spreading the true name of Yahweh—"However, I have let you live for this purpose: to show you My power and *to make My name known in all the earth.*" (Ex. 9:16) This is the real meaning of election and the mission of those who were elected to receive the revealed meaning of Yahweh, spreading this word and faith all around, starting from the Canaan. And instead of getting this idea in the perspective of Abraham, their father whose merit was that they were blessed with God's entrustment of His work, they have mixed politics and self-centrism with the religiousness leading to a wrong, misunderstood religion. "I've been very zealous for the LORD God of the Heavenly Armies," he replied. "The Israelis have abandoned your covenant, demolished your altars, executed your prophets with swords, and I that's right, just me! I am the only one left. Now they're seeking my life, to get rid of me!" 1 Kgs 19:10, 14.

After all . . .

In conclusion the abolishment of Judaic religion made by Christ was not because it was fulfilled, for everything in the OT was only a preparation of the real deal, the NT, or for the fact that all the so-called religious rules 'of God' given in the OT were to expire when

Christ would come. Considering this, there is no wonder that the Jews did not accept Christ's mission as the Messiah, the Rescuer, and fails to do it even today. The true explanation, highlighted in this article, is that the old religion of the Jews, did not contained only Jehovah's revelation, but also the amount of religious impressions and memories of Jews from captivity and exit combined with their desire for revenge and take over. A more obvious way of accepting the Rescuer–Christ is to accept the fact that all other words, besides later prophets' and Christ's, were merely human projection of a God feared and revengeful, an image inconsistent with the revelation of the god of love. Same God who loves you, even at your most sinful stage, cannot hate other more or less sinful.

So, was Judaism went wrong and grew a humanly religion instead of a revealed one? The answer is ya, sure is! It is said by Jeremiah and several other prophets in the real side of revelation that Jews have followed their own mind and will, and not God's at all. "When I delivered your ancestors out of Egypt, I never said anything to them about wanting burnt offerings and sacrifices as such. But I did say this, commanded this: "Obey me. Do what I say and I will be your God and you will be my people. Live the way I tell you. Do what I command so that your lives will go well."

This assertion still have to answer to one crucial question: if OT is full of writings and thoughts that are not corresponding to the same God revealed in NT by Christ, how come that Apostles and Christian Church after have considered that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3.16)? Well, these true words are not necessarily opposed to everything I've said here, for the OT has two separate realities, the *Prophetism* and the *religiousness of Jewish* people, one from Egypt exodus, that was affected by time, social context, ego and nationalism, religious background inherited from Mesopotamia and Egypt, and so on. Therefore, OT has two kinds of images of God, the genuine one expressed by the 'voice of God' in prophecies and Decalogue, and that 'image of Yahweh' pictured by a people long been deserted among other peoples and which has needed a protective–God image to succeed take over them. The OT is thus saw by St. Paul as

given by inspiration and not that all its content is revealed by God, namely that everything has to be put in God's account. The writings of OT are perhaps inspired to do not deviate from the historical and prophetic truths; therefore, the historical books unveil the reality of Jewish people, one that has projected an image of a God vengeful and fierce for his protection and as a psychological shield for their violent behavior against peers from other nations. Against this self–projected image are all the circumstances in the prophetic books and the whole NT.

"'But do you think they listened? Not a word of it. They did just what they wanted to do, indulged any and every evil whim and got worse day by day. From the time your ancestors left the land of Egypt until now, I've supplied a steady stream of my servants the prophets, but do you think the people listened? Not once. Stubborn as mules and worse than their ancestors!'. "Tell them all this, but don't expect them to listen. Call out to them, but don't expect an answer." (Jeremiah 7:24–28).

[4] NIV (The New International Version) version of translation is „*Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit*".

[5] How else can be understood a habit took from Egypt and used as the Yahweh's new Law way of punishment? For example, before even getting the Law from Yahweh on Sinai's mountain (Ex. 20), Moses was afraid that Jews will use this punishment over him, Exo 17.4: "And Moses made outcry unto Yahweh saying, *What am I to do, with this people?* Yet a little, and *they will stone me*."

[6] G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 49 et.al. See: https://books.google.ro/books?id=znB4gOMlb3AC&pg=PA49&lpg=PA49&dq=stoning+saqal&source=bl&ots=TqZz8XoZ3v&sig=F3EML25Wkh_FNBV7FcK6fs0sLRE&hl=ro&sa=X&sqi=2&ved=0ahUKEwibqcXWrfjLAhVInQ4KHcb_CKUQ6AEIQTAG#v=onepage&q=stoning%20saqal&f=false (Last acessed on April 2, 2016.)

[7] More about "God Commanded Punishment" from *Talmud* in Carol A. Valentine, "Death Penalty and Talmud Law", 2003. Cf: http://www.come-and-hear.com/editor/capunish_1.html (Last accessed on April 8, 2016.)

[8] Barbara A. Somervill, *Empires of Ancient Mesopotamia*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2001, 114.

[9] *Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Sanhedrin*, Folio 49a, Soncino 1961 Edition, 332–334. Cf: http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_49.html#49b (Last accessed on April 8, 2016)

[10] Geoffrey Robinson, "The *Motif* of Deafness and Blindness in Isaiah 6:9–10: A Contextual, Literary, and Theological Analysis," BBR 8, 1998, 176. Also relate to Torsten Uhlig, *The Theme of Hardening in the Book of Isaiah: An Analysis of Communicative*. See: https://books.google.ro/books?id=9MLo0TPOShkC&pg=PA7&lpg=PA7&dq=Robinson,+%E2%80%9CMotif,%E2%80%9D&source=bl&ots=LuYx9wQOAQ&sig=uUCc57XqXIM_3oyDi5jwRLm5xRk&hl=ro&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiD_Je_-ubLAhXFJw4KHQemCk4Q6AEINzAG#v=onepage&q=Robinson%2C%20%E2%80%9CMotif%2C%E2%80%9D&f=false (Last accessed on March 30, 2016.)

[11] *The Amplified Bible* (AMP), the first Bible project of *The Lockman Foundation*, 2015.

[12] *The Holman Christian Standard Bible* (HCSB) is a trusted, original translation of God's Word. A team of more than 100 scholars from 17 denominations pursued two ideals with every translation decision: each word must reflect clear, contemporary English and each word must be faithful to the original languages of the Bible, 2009.

The Future of Knowledge
and the Ways of Doing Theology

Sorin Bădrăgan

ABSTRACT: The classical ways of doing theology, the apophatic and the cataphatic will face a new era in what regards human knowledge; the growth and the speed of the latter combined with the social changes that are already under way, will pose challenges and perhaps create opportunities for the Christian discourse about God. In this paper we argue that the knowledge of the future favors an apophatic approach ratherthan a cataphatic one.
KEY WORDS: knowledge, future, apophatic, cataphatic, postmodernity.

The way we do theology has been understood mainly in two different ways by theologians; generally, the Eastern tradition argues for a negative approach when speaking of God—because He transcends human existence and existence itself, we cannot know Him as an object that is presented to our minds, but we negate all that can be said about Him and unite with Him. The Western tradition has been generally associated with a positive approach—while we cannot know God exhaustively, we can know Him partially. But how would this be impacted by the development of human knowledge? In this paper we will explore the dynamics of future knowledge and the way we pursue the knowledge of God; we will look at the main ways of doing theology, then consider briefly the future of knowledge and then suggest which of the ways is more likely to be benefit of the changes.

The Possibility of Knowing God

James Walter Gustafson speaks of four approaches to knowledge: empiricism, rationalism, intuitionism and authoritarianism. So 'to know' applies to sense experience (empiricists believe that all knowledge arises from and is tested by appealing to sensory experience); to logical processes (knowledge comes by pure reasoning); to intuitions (some kinds of knowledge come by direct awareness, without empirical observation or logical deduction) and to authoritative pronouncements (this is also important in what regards the source of knowledge). (Gustafson 1998, 191–194)

In the long and productive history of Christian thought each of these ways of knowing has been considered appropriate to gain knowledge of the divine being.

The heart of all theology is to know God and to make Him known; but He is not accessible to us by any of the normal scientific criteria, so it seems that there is something about our knowledge of God which does not fit the regular scientific pattern. Although God and human beings are ontological different, the *imago Dei* in man opens up the possibility for the latter to know God, who reveals Himself. But man knowing the divine does not entail mastering or possession by man of the One known, but on contrary, knowing God leads to an even greater lack of knowledge.

Because we know God exclusively through what He reveals Himself to us, we must listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit who speaks to us as church and as world about Christ. Therefore, the Scriptures are the main sourse of the theological knowledge, though they are not exclusive nor exhaustive.

Speaking on how we gain this knowledge of the divine, Vladimir Lossky differentiated between two kinds of human knowledge: the first one is episteme, which the scientific and philosophical epistemology; when we talk about God, *episteme* does not help at all, because our mind cannot see nor understand this reality. The Orthodox theologian goes on saying that any philosophical discourse about God is pure speculation. The other kind of human knowledge in Lossky's understanding is *gnosis*, which does not belong

naturally to human beings, but it is given to them when meeting the divine being. This way man discovers that God is knowable and unknowable at the same time. (Lossky 1998, 40, 41) The way in which God is 'knowable' is not a matter of logical processes but one of participation, experience of the divine, as we shall see.

The Apophatic Approach to the Knowledge of God

Rethorical questions such as the one found in the book of the prophet Isaiah 40:25 "To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One" point to an approach less confident on man's part. When God reveals Himself as "I am that I am" (Exodus 3:14), there is not much room for descriptive language about God. With a tradition that goes beyond Christian circles towards other religions as well as going back to pre-Christian philosophies, the concept of the impossibility to truly know the divine being has shaped the thinking of many Christian theologians. It was the influence of Philo of Alexandria, then the one of Athenagoras and surely the one of neo–platonism that lead to an emphasis of the utter transcendence of God—He is beyond existence, essence and even personality. In a sense, the analogies used to talk about God have the opposite result as they can limit the infinite God.

Pseudo–Dionysius the Areopagite, an unknown monk in last 5th and early 6th century, was the first one to articulate a mystical theology which has become very influential especially for the Eastern tradition; a mystical approach flows only naturally from an understanding of God as it can be seen in the following paragraph from *The Divine Names and the Mystical Theology*:

> We say this of the cause of all being beyond all: it is not being–less, not lifeless, not without reason, not without intellect. Not body . . . not what has quality, quantity, or mass, not I space, not visible . . . not light in what lacks, not, and has not, alteration, destruction, privation, diminution, or anything else which pertains to what is sensed. (Pseudo–Dionysius the Areopagite, 217–219)

The thought of Pseudo–Dionysius is interpreted and developed by Maximus the Confessor who anticipates the distinction between God's essence and His energies asserting that God can be contemplated, known in his energies or attributes, while remaining incomprehensible in His essence. This was reaffirmed by St Gregory Palamas in the 14th century, who also adds that the divine energies cannot exist apart His essence; they are God Himself in His action and revelation to the world. In relation to us humans, the divine energy is the grace of God. Man is transformed or 'deified' by uniting with God, experiencing Him in His energies. (Ware1993, 67–68)

Vladimir Lossky reaffirmed emphatically the distinction between *ousia* (the divine essence), *hypostaseis* (the three Persons) and *energeiai* (the energies, the graces of God to us). As the *ousia*, the uncreated, remains inaccessible to creatures, Lossky considers that the appropriate way to approach God is by denying all that is said about Him and unite with him, that is the apophatic way. We can know the One who is beyond all objects and knowledge through *agnosia* (unknowledge), by confessing the transcendence of the Trinity and contemplate Him. (Lossky1998, 40–41) What role then do the Scripture and the dogma play, since apophatic theology denies the ability of human mind to help man to know God? Lossky addresses this aspect by using the interpretation that Gregory of Nazianzen gave for Moses walking up on Mount of Sinai; he asserts that in theology there different levels of understanding for man, the Scriptures and the dogma being a first step in the contemplation of God. The goal of this process is deification, as the apophatic way understands that it will never end in rational knowledge but in the union with God. (Lossky 1998, 41)

The Cataphatic Approach to the Knowledge of God

At the other end is the positive approach in knowing God; this is based on the understanding that although transcendent and infinite, God can be known and talked about because He Himself revealed to humanity; He can be known through His presence and His works in creation. Our knowledge of God is conditioned by the extent of His

self–revelation, by the limitations of our creatureliness and falleness, as well as by the grace of acknowledging Him as Lord in obedience and praise. Therefore we can know God and speak of Him as He is because He revealed Himself to us and because we meet Him in a personal relationship.

J.I. Packer emphasizes the difference between *knowing about God* and *knowing God*. The knowledge about God consists of believing the truths about God, His Person and His work, as found in the Scriptures and in the experience of the people of God. But we have to turn this knowledge about God into knowledge of God through saying yes to God so that we establish a personal relationship to Him, through meditation and communion with God. The meditation is seen as being an activity of the mind, when man thinks over and applies to himself, the things he knows about the way God works, His purposes and promises. He summarizes saying that we know God 'through Jesus Christ the Lord, in virtue of His cross and meditation, on the basis of His word of promise, by the power of the Holy Spirit, via personal exercise of faith.' (Packer 1985, 22)

Emil Brunner says that God is not an 'object' that someone can manipulate by means of his own reasoning. When man begins to know God, he realizes that God is incomparable and cannot be defined. But we can know God because He has made known His Name. Unless He does not make known His Name, He cannot be known. So this knowledge is not something we get on our own, but it is given. We can know who God is, who He is, only in His presence in revelation. (Brunner 1950, 117–127)

However, Lossky criticizes the cataphatic way of knowing God saying that this theology lead man to a kind of knowledge which is imperfect. In his understanding, the imperfection of the cataphatic theology is seen both the method and the result of it. He follows the arguments of Pseudo–Dionysius, who, trying to prove the superiority of the apophatic theology over the cataphatic one, in *The Theological Representations* argues that the positive theology begins with the unitary character of the divine nature going to plurality, emphasizing the Trinity and the incarnation. In *The Divine Names*, he asserts that the names given to God by us as 'good', 'life', 'wisdom' and others show clearly the descendent course in the sphere of plurality (the

same thing he mentions in *The Symbolic Theology*). Along theses lines, Lossky sustains that the nature of God is unknowable in its depths, even God reveals Himself as being wisdom, love and goodness. The divine names found in Scriptures should not be used as rational concepts in making a positive science of the divine nature but they are images that lead us to the contemplation of the One who transcends evertything.

Cataphatic theology does not suggest does we can fully know God, but that God is knowable though not exhaustively. Paul implies this incomprehensibility of God when he writes 'the Spirit reaches everything, even the depths of God' and then that 'no one comprehends the things of God except the Spirit of God.' (1 Cor. 2: 10–12). So God is incomprehensible in the sense that He is cannot by fully known, not in the sense that we are unable to know Him.

The Apophatic–Cataphatic Synthesis

One of the greatest Orthodox theologians of the twentieth–century, Dumitru Staniloae considered that although the apophatic way as the supreme way of knowledge, it is not sufficient. A synthesis of the two ways is necessary—the cataphatic way presents God as the Creator and the Provider of the Universe, while the apophatic way gives us a direct experience of the mystical presence of God, which cannot really be communicated using words. In spite of this, apophatic knowledge has to be communicated through concepts of cataphatic knowledge. (Stanilaoe 1996, 81)

Nikos Matsoukas affirms that 'the apophatic way and the cataphatic way of the knowledge of God is not a merely problem of gnoseology but an ontological problem.' (Matsoukas 1997, 167) He asserts that using the 'organical relationship' between the cataphatic way and the apophatic way, we can avoid falling into the trap that the Western theology has fallen in, that is that theology studies the created, where God and His attributes would be sought for.

The Dynamics of the Future Knowledge

How would the dynamics of the knowledge of the future impact speaking about God? The future of knowledge is conditioned by what happens today; there are some aspects that point to the directions in which it is likely that knowledge will develop. Globalisation impacts all areas of life—it spreads the information in a network that does not have limits, so change and innovation become an integral part of our daily existence. David Weinberger seems to be right when suggesting that the properties of knowledge change dramatically now as they are conditioned by the medium by which it is communicated; if until recently knowledge has been mediated by paper, not the internet is the main 'carrier', which makes knowledge debatable, always open to criticism. (Weinberger 2014)

The volume of knowledge and its speed grow exponentially; for example, in what regards technology, the so-called Wright's law—the decrease of cost is exponential because it is power law of cumulative production is combined with the so-called Moore's law—technology grows exponentially in time, so that technological progress is indeed exponential and forecastable. (Nagy, Farmer, Bui, Trancik 2013)

This exponential growth in knowledge is triggering a specialization in every field as well as a centering of the sources of knowledge; despite the inter–connectivity of the global village, those that can contribute to the advancement of a highly specialized technology will be companies which will greatly benefit (e.g. Apple).

However, the future of knowledge is uncertain; in his book on future, Jacques Attali suggests three possible scenarios for the world to come: one possible development of human history will lead to a hyper–empire, built around commerce, wealth but which will have great social costs eventually causing the self-destruction of mankind. Another scenario sees the humankind entering a hyper–conflict, that will lead to wars that will involve nations, religions, terrorists; this too has the potential to end human race, or al least to take it a regress in all aspects of human life. The most optimistic scenario is about

the development of hyper–democracy, a system that will slowly take charge of all nations and that will improve life, share the benefits of scientific progress. Attali suggests that these scenarios will take place in the order they were presented, given that the mankind will not self-destruct in any of the first two. (Attali, 2007, 131–214) This is to say that future is open and it is highly probable but not guaranteed that knowledge will grow and be shared by all.

How Would This Impact Our Knowledge of God?

Knowledge was desacralized and demythologized by modernity, as David Harvey pointed out, but the changes are still under way in what we call 'postmodernity'. (David Harvey, 1990, 13)

Reporting on 'contemporary knowledge', Jean–Francois Lyotard argues that postmodernity rejects the metanarratives of modernity as patronizing, actually brutally imposing on all; these metanarratives, fundamental in explaining reality and gaining knowledge in modern times, are to be 'demolished', something which seems to happen naturally in recent times. (Lyotard, 1984, xxiv) Because language is a social construction, it must be deconstructed so that 'true knowledge' to take place.

In the postmodern context, cataphatic theology is likely to loose more and more ground to an apophatic approach, as Karen Armstrong argues in her book, *The Case for God*. Because knowing a transcendent God is wholly dependent on His Self–revelation, progress of human knowledge does not entail a growth of knowledge of God—the latter is is an eschatological concept.

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BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

The Intercultural Dimension: A Determinant Factor in the Future Development of the International Commercial Negotiation Process

Dorothea Lidia Caraman

ABSTRACT: The theory and international practice enshrines negotiation as being a multidimensional concept, based on communication. This feature confers negotiation a complex and varied content and makes it dependent on multiple factors that determines its success. These factors which have a significant importance on international negotiation include also culture, which contributes significantly to the enhance of the negotiation process complexity, adding a new dimension to the content of international negotiations. The participant's culture proves to be one of the strongest and most influential factors that can stimulate or taint the process and the results of negotiation. In this paper we propose to analyze the implications of the cultural factors on the negotiation process and how they can stimulate or taint the process and the results of negotiation.
KEY WORDS: culture, international negotiation, intercultural differences

Present in everyday language, the term negotiation is assimilated with a way of thinking, with an attitude, a behavior, a science, a philosophy. "In business you do not get what you deserve but what you negotiate," said Chester L. Karrass, repeating in this way a gloomy assertion, but a commonly accepted one.

Moreover, in the specialized literature, there is an analogy between negotiation and a chess game in which everyone move their pieces in order to win. Therefore, negotiation, represents a process of exchanging ideas, beliefs, strategic discussions, a process which is heading for an agreement. In the broadest sense, the specialized literature describes negotiation as a concentrated and interactive interpersonal communication,[1] in which two or more parties with contradictory interests and positions, but complementary, aim to reach an agreement that can solve a common problem or can achieve a common goal. In this confrontation, in a principal and loyal mode, evidence and arguments are brought, objection and claims are formulated, concessions and compromises are made in order to avoid the rupture of relations but also to avoid the open conflict. Therefore we deduce that negotiation is an acceptable way of cooperation, through which the parties can reach to iron out the differences between them on the basis of mutually beneficial solutions. And the main objective of the negotiation is not achieving a victory, but an agreement of will, a consensus between partners and not between adversaries. Consequently, negotiation, when is performed properly should not give rise to any defeated party, but on the contrary, all the participants to the negotiation should feel that their own necessities have been satisfied or that the right decision has been made.

The negotiation process involves therefore the need to fulfill previously at least two major conditions: accepting the legitimacy of the parties positions (the premise consists in accepting the existence of differences between the partners, where objectives, interests and views of everyone are legitimate) and the cooperation bet (partners will focus their attention on the elements of cooperation and not on divergent elements.) In this respect, within the relationship between the parties, negotiation will involve a set of reciprocal concessions that will be repeated until the balance will be reached, balance which will be evaluated by each party involved in the negotiation according to his needs.

An important distinction of negotiation, which results from the multitude of definitions given to this term over time, is that of internal negotiations, held at national and international level,

negotiation with foreign partners. The latter, which is the subject of our study, is characterized by a greater complexity, as the confrontation between supply and demand on the foreign market is more diversified, determined by many factors such as international business practice, the national laws of the parties entering into negotiation, the internal prices level, foreign economy, the diversity of the exchange rates, the increased exigency towards the technical qualitative level, and not least, cultural diversity dimension. The international negotiation has an intercultural character, meaning that the parties are from different cultures and the communication and harmonization process of the interests is complex and is influenced by the diversity of socio-cultural, political, ideological, legal factors, etc. In general, however, whether it is a meter of internal or international negotiation, the definitions emphasize, as a defining characteristic of negotiation, communication. Therefore we retain that the commercial international negotiation is an organized process of communication between companies or partners which come from different cultures aiming to gradually adapt their interests related to the subject of negotiation, in order to achieve a mutually acceptable business arrangements, materialized in the international contract.[2] There are also problematic aspects of negotiation (if handling and confrontation, through which the parties pursue quite different goals than reaching a mutually beneficial agreement, represents a form of negotiation) on which we will not tarry to much, being too far from our subject.

But what does "culture" means? It seems obvious that, at the first glance, it is culture that makes Americans Americans, Frenchmen French or Romanians Romanians. Geert Hofstede[3] compares culture with a kind of *software of the mind,* which mentally programs the way of thinking, acting and of perceiving reality, developing the self image of each person in relation with the members of a group or category of people. Conceived in this way, culture is not genetically given, but represents that legacy that is transmitted through distinctive features of a society, in spiritual, material, intellectual or emotional terms. Therefore, there are no such special genes that would compel Germans to cherish the rigid order, or Americans to value individualism and courage. It is about a behavior cultivated

over time, which therefore, can be changed. In the spirit of Hofstede's metaphor, it would be enough to install to each negotiator a cultural *software* in order to determine them to think like a Frenchman, like an American or like a Brazilian. Unfortunately, things are not like this in reality nor are so simple. In order to understand the spirit of other cultures and implicitly to understand its members modality to negotiate, it requires an intense study, a great sense of observation and, above all, the willingness to learn, giving up the preconceived idea that, in all respects and without a trace of disbelief, *our culture is superior to others*.

We will begin in this way to experience the culture only when we will be forced to acknowledge the fact that not everyone feels and lives the same way we do. Or when we will notice that there are people whose "moral order"—whose ". . . model of constraints and permissions to act in certain ways and [their] prohibitions not to act in other ways"[4]—differs from ours. But, instead of focusing on what is different towards the other culture, we will submit our own culture to the same attentive investigation that we apply other cultures.

To achieve this insight we should take into consideration the cultural variables that influence both our negotiating strategies and our partners strategies: contextual factors (basic factors), the negotiation process and the atmosphere.

1. The contextual factors are represented by:

• *Objectives*—results desired by each side. These may be common, conflicting or complementary with those of the opponent. Excepting the conflicting objectives, the other two are positively influencing the negotiation process.

• *Environment*—represents the cultural factors, the social and structural ones which are relevant to both parties in the negotiation process (time, location, the culture of the negotiator etc.).

• *Third parties*—other participants in the negotiation process such as consultants, advisors, subcontractors etc.

• *Negotiators*—they will influence the negotiation process through their expertise and negotiating skills. Also, the negotiator's personality is of a great importance in the negotiation process. A

personality that will be appreciated is a personality that has the ability to make others understand its position and also has the ability to approache foreign persons easily and without any problems.

• *The partners position on the market*—if the position on the market of a party is one of monopoly the negotiation process will be influenced due to the high pressure that will be on the partner which is negotiating with the partner that holds the monopoly.

2. The negotiation process—unfolded in an international context will be influenced by the cultural factors, as well as by the strategic ones. The cultural factors include:

• *Time:* in the Western culture is more valued, having a greater importance ("time is money"), while in Asia, Latin America and Africa is not such a valuable instrument. However, it is advisable to specify in advance the behavior related to time (the desired length of negotiation) for a better planning.

• *The individual conduct versus the collective conduct:* knowing this fact about the other party is essential in building the strategy. We need to find out if the other team of negotiators will search for a individual solution or for a collective one, so as a negotiator to be able to formulate efficiently his arguments and counterarguments.

• *The communication pattern:* while direct communication is specific to some cultures, other culture prefer indirect communication. Thus, words such as "may," "possible," "I will think about it" can mean "no" or "impossible" and in other cultures can mean "yes." Arabic and some Asian languages, contain many exaggerations and metaphors that are part of the indirect communication.

Also, Germans and Americans prefer direct communication, while Japanese and French appreciate the indirect communication. Indirect communication is more difficult to be comprehended for someone who does not have enough information such as the one who uses this type of communication. The indirect communication implies metaphorical references, allusions, subtle facial expressions and rich body language. It is not recommended to use indirect communication if the partner is not using it, because it is seen as a sign of insincerity.

• *The emphasis on personal relationships:* this can vary according to each culture. In some Western countries the negotiator personality does not matter as much as the subject of the discussion or, conversely, in other cultures, the negotiator personality may worth more than the organization he represent.

• *Inclination toward risks:* Some cultures are more predisposed to risk than others. Japanese will not subdue to risks, but Americans and Indians will not flinch back from this.

• *The scope of negotiation:* the aim is to seeks the link between contract and relationship (*which is the purpose of t bouth*). On the one hand the aim is to seek the legal form of negotiation, rights and responsibilities and, on the other hand, the aim is to establish a relationship based on trust. While Americans consider that signing a contract means only completion of the transaction, the Chinese and the Arabs consider that this is the first step in the consolidation of a long term relationship.

• *The strategic factors:* to develop a strategy during a international negotiation, the negotiators must consider the following things:

• Negotiation may take place both in a *formal and informal setting.* The formal and informal style is different in many countries, therefore, to avoid mistakes is necessary to know the style approached by the opposed party, and what this entails.

• It is recommended to know, as far as possible, *what kind of strategy the other party will use.* So, one can choose between a hard, soft or intermediate strategy.

• An important thing is to know if the opponent party uses an *impulsive or rational approche in making decisions.*

• Identifying *the need to contract a consultant* and analyzing the cost–benefit ratio, in case the other team is better prepared and have better knowledge in the field.

3. The atmosphere—is perceived as the way in which one party sees the behaviour of the other party.

The atmosphere characterizes the relationship that develops during the negotiation process. The atmosphere features may differ from a negotiation to another. These characteristics are:

• *Conflict/Cooperation*—The existence of conflict and cooperation represents a basic feature of the negotiation process. The parties have common interests in finding solutions, leading initially to the cooperation between the two teams. In the same time, a conflict of interest may occur, because the costs for one of the party represent incomes for the other party.

The degree of conflict or cooperation depends on the negotiated subject, the discussed issues (price, technical information, etc.) and on how the two teams treat those problems. In any negotiation process, each stage can be placed on a scale that has the cooperation and conflict at opposite poles.

• *The relationship power/dependence*—it is influenced by a number of context factors, such as the market position of the opponent team. For example, if the opponent team holds the monopoly, then, it will be in a position of power, and the other team will be the dependent one.

Also, the ability to control a relationship is related to the perceived power of the two sides, to the experience of the negotiators and their access to information. Therefore, a balanced power relationship will only be possible if both sides perceive a equal power (none of the teams do not consider to be dependent one of the other).

Expectations can be of two types: *the long–term* ones, concerning the possibilities of a future business, and *the short–term* ones, which relate only to the current transaction.

While those who have long–term expectations are more inclined to agree for a deal concerning the current transaction (*because they are aiming for amicable collaboration also in the future*), those with short term expectations, focuses only on the objectives of the current transaction and have a greater involvement in the process of negotiation as they consider that participation brings better results than non-participation (through their active participation they determine the parties to move quickly from one phase of negotiation to another one). The expectations are in progress and may change in the different stages of negotiation.

So, having the quality of negotiators, and taking into consideration the above menentioned factors, it is very important

to recognize that the reasons for which people choose an action against another one are complex and are shaped by context. This approach is based primarily on the idea of finding a winning solution on both sides,[5] to resolve the problem so that both parties to be satisfied, where "Gain" is the solution which satisfies both paties. So, "whenever there are differences between the cultural patterns of the negotiators, the business problems must be dealt starting from these differences, which represents what is known as cultural distance."[6] And for blurring the cultural distance will be pursued a way to create a bridge between cultural differences by appealing to the following modalities:

> • the use of other's culture to create a bridge (*a trick is to say that one of your family members belong to that culture*);
> • the use of your own culture to create a bridge (*you convince the other partie to adopt elements of your culture by offering training programs in your country*);
> • the use of some culture combinations (*elements from both cultures are used*);
> • The use of a third culture (*negotiators who share a love for a certain culture different from their own culture, can use this in order to build a relationship*).

NOTES

[1] "Negotiation is a form of communication that involves a communicative process, a dynamic one, of adjustment, of establishing the agreement in case of conflicts of interests, whereby two or more parties, animated by different motives and having their own objectives, mediates their positions to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement,, Deac, Ioan, *Introducere în teoria negocierii.* Bucuresti: Editura Paideia, 2002, 9.

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[5] Kevin Avruch: *Culture and conflict resolution*, 1998, 77–80.

[6] V. Danciu, „Negocierile internaţionale de afaceri sub impactul culturii: o analiză bazată pe comparaţii contextuale," Economie teoretică şi aplicată, volumul XVII, (2010), 86–104.

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The Future of Knowledge in the Internal Audit

Emilia Vasile
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ABSTRACT: In the last years the focus of internal audit has shifted away from business toward financial controls. In the future internal audit departments need to align their contributions to the organization's strategic objectives. The purpose of the internal audit which is organised within the entities is to provide counselling to the general management and to assess the functionality of the internal control system, activities by which it brings an additional value to the entity which is audited. The optimal functioning of the entities on the basis of an integrated internal control framework imposes the existence of a *proper control environment* which should promote the ethical values, be transparent, accept good practice standards and set responsibilities on the same line with the strategies and policies approved by the superior level management.
KEY WORDS: internal audit, high quality decision, corporate governance, transparancey. (JEL Classification : M4, M2, M1)

1. The Prerogatives of the Organization of the Internal Audit Activity

The internal audit activity is conducted based on certain professional standards which are accepted at international level. However, this common framework has a consultative nature depending on the specific culture of the organisations and on the national culture.

It is a proof on professionalism for the internal auditors if the activities they conduct manage to be closer and closer of the *International Standards of Internal Audit.*

There are countries which have taken up the English language in the current practice out of the wish to observe not only the Internal Audit Standards but also their spirit. For example: Sweden, Norway and Finland.

The internal audit is a function which is recommended to be organized within the structure of the entities, regardless whether they work in the public or private system.

In Romania, the internal audit is regulated by means of the law in the public system, but it remains a permanent challenge for the private system as well.

The purpose of the internal audit which is organised within the entities is to provide counselling to the general management and to assess the functionality of the internal control system, activities by which it brings an additional value to the entity which is audited.

2. Redefinition of the Manner of Organization of the Internal Control

In order for an internal audit function to be efficient it has to rely on the *Management and internal control system* within the entity, as it represents the object of activity of the internal audit. In case the internal control system within the entity is not organized and does not function according to the principles of the international standards, then the internal audit function will not be able to be efficient.

In consequence, the organization of the internal audit activity neither reduces nor eliminates the internal control. On the contrary, in the context of the general international good practice principles, *the control is associated with a broader sense*, as it is seen as a *managerial function* and not as a simple checking operation.

The optimal functioning of the entities on the basis of an integrated internal control framework imposes the existence of a *proper control environment* which should promote the ethical

values, be transparent, accept good practice standards and set responsibilities on the same line with the strategies and policies approved by the superior level management.

The internal control is present at all the levels of the entity and is manifested under the form of *self-control, chain control (on phases of the process) and hierarchical control.* From the point of view of the time when it is carried out, the control may be *concomitant* (operative), *ex-ante* (feed-forward) and *ex-post* (feed-back).

For a proper understanding of the internal control concept, seen from the light of the general good practice principles accepted at international level and in the European Union, we give the definition adopted by the European Commission, as follows:

The internal control *represents the entirety of policies and procedures conceived and implemented by the management and the staff of the public entity, with a view to providing a reasonable assurance in order:*

- •   to reach the objectives of the entity in an economical, efficient and effective manner;
- •   to observe the external rules, the policies and the rule of management;
- •   to protect goods and information;
- •   to prevent and track down embezzlements and errors;
- •   the quality of the accountancy documents and the production of reliable information, in due time, concerning the financial and management segment.

The management process[1] materialized in the managerial functions of forecast, coordination, organisation and training *has as support the continuous carrying out of the control-evaluation function,* which, in essence, consists in the comparison of between the results and the objectives, tracking down the causes which led to the positive or negative deviations that were found and in taking the necessary corrective or preventive measures.

The performance of the control-evaluation function is no longer seen as an exclusive prerogative of certain specialized control persons/structures, quite the contrary, *the control is considered* as

being *a process which is dissipated in the whole entity* and, *within which, each person,* beginning with the general manager/credit chief accountant and ending with the last employee, is *responsible for carrying out a certain type of control.* The control activities may be grouped as follows:[2]

- • *strategic control* concerning the accomplishment of the general objectives, which reverts to the superior level leaders;
- • *tactical control* of the fulfilment of the derived objectives, of the first rank, out of the general ones, carried out by the medium level leaders;
- • *operational control* with regard to the attainment of the derived objectives, of the second and third rank, out of the general ones, which reverts to the inferior level leader;
- • *self-control* is carried out by each person in part, leader or executor, in the accomplishment of the objective of the entrusted tasks.

Among the current *control activities* we find: the observation, notice, approval, decision, decree, sanction, planning, checking, analysis, expenditure budgeting, safety of assets, task apportionment, reporting and monitoring.

Besides *the control activities which are integrated in the management line* specialized controls may be organized, carried out by specifically set up structures (commissions, control compartments, etc.), whose activity is conducted based on a plan conceived by taking into consideration the risks.

In practice, *control does not mean*:[3]

- • re-doing the work of the subordinate employees;
- • setting up traps in order to uncover the errors;
- • to permanently conduct an excessive surveillance/ checking of what is being carried out.

At the same time, *control means*:[4]

- an act of assistance, materialized in the guidance of the controlled person in the new and difficult tasks;
- a manner of adopting a proper conduct in relation to the strong or weak points of the controlled person;
- an act of motivation, in the sense that the controlled person should understand that his/her work is important and that his/her efforts, difficulties or performances are not ignored;
- an act of checking the achievement of the tasks at random periods and which has to be finalized with a registered written document (notice, note, report, etc.), which is necessary in order to rank the quality of the control and to know the control frequency.

The own internal control system existing in every entity has to be developed and perfected up to a level where it should enable the leadership to hold the best possible control on the functioning of the entity in its whole, as well as on each activity with a view to attaining the set objectives.

The general manager/credit chief accountant, as well as the other persons who fill a leading position within the entity, are responsible for the creation and functioning of that system of internal control which should provide a reasonable assurance that the objectives shall be reached.

The managerial responsibility exerted by the management of an organisation supposes that, within the limits of certain internal and external constraints, with the purpose of the efficient, effective and compliant attainment of the set objectives, it should communicate and be liable for the inobservance of the managerial obligations in compliance with the type of legal liability.

In the organisation of the managerial activity, the managers have to bear in mind the following *fundamental principles*:[5]

- the general manager/credit chief accountant is responsible for the accomplishment of the objectives of the entity;

- the general manager/credit chief accountant can delegate his/her authority without, however, being relieved of the general responsibility;
- there is no managerial responsibility without corresponding authority;
- the responsibility needs transparency and liability;
- the control system has to rely on checks and corrective measures within the entity, but also on external evaluations.

The managers should no longer wait for someone from the outside to come and organise the control system within their own entities.

In the period of the planned economy they have been used to a system in which the Romanian Court of Accounts, the Ministry of Public Finances and other external control bodies came systematically in order to carry out background controls concerning their own activity.

At present, *the managers have to understand* the responsibility they bear to organize their own internal control system, within the entities they run, as well as *the fact that the responsibility has been entirely transferred to them,* and this requires their involvement in the effective organisation of this system.

For the public system, the role of the Ministry of Public Finances and/or Court of Accounts is to estimate whether *the implemented internal control system is working and is capable of preventing or stopping possible un-economical uses of funds* and *to identify potential weak points in the management of the funds they administrate.*

Given these conditions, the management shall have to "coin" audit activities which should allow them to control the risks which appear and evolve permanently and to limit their consequences, by means of a *flexible internal control system* which should be reduced or easily developed in certain areas or compartments within the entities.

The assurance of implementation of the new *System of public internal financial audit—SPIFA in Romania* was made by setting up the *Central Harmonization Unit for Public Internal Audit*—CHUPIA, in 2003, and the *Central Unit of Harmonization of the Financial*

Management and Control Systems—CUHFMCS, in 2005, both within the Ministry of Public Finances.

The main purpose for setting up the CUHFMCS was that of supporting the general management within the public entities to define and organize *their own System of internal control.*

Based on these grounds, in 2005, the CUHFMCS within the Ministry of Public Finances has issued the *Code of Internal Control,[6*]* which includes *The Standards of management/internal control at the public entities for the development of the managerial control system* and contains regulations concerning the obligations and the responsibilities of the management in each public institution, out of which we mention:

- The leaders of the public institutions shall rule *necessary measures for the elaboration and development of the managerial control systems based on the international control standards,* including for the elaboration and development of procedures in written form for each activity;
- The management has the *obligation to identify the risks* and to conduct actions which should maintain the risks at an acceptable level;
- *For potential necessities of carrying out certain point inspections or control activities,* the managers may set up *commissions* or—if necessary—control compartments which should function permanently or on certain time frames, with a view to solving the dysfunctionalities or the irregularities found within the entity.

The internal control standards represent an important contribution for the knowledge of the *general good practice principles in the field,* based on which the entities may set up structures of enforcement of the financial management and internal control systems.

For the public system, based on the Order of the Minister of Public Finances no. 946/2005 for the approval of the Code for internal control, the leaders of the public entities have to have the necessary measures for the elaboration *and/or development of the* managerial control systems *of each organisation, including the* procedures, made formal on activities, *taking account of the particularities of*

the legal, organisational, personnel, financing framework and of other specific elements.

The objectives, actions, responsibilities, deadlines, as well as other components of the respective measures shall be included in *programmes of development of the managerial control systems,* elaborated at the level of each public entity. The programme shall also include, in a distinct manner, the actions of professional training, both for the people in leading positions, as for the ones in executive positions, and their manner of organization.

With a view to monitoring, coordinating and methodological guiding in regard to the own managerial control systems, by means of an act of internal decision, the leader of the public entity sets up working groups *with tasks in this sense, if this becomes necessary.*

The structure, manner of organisation and work, as well as other elements concerning the set up working groups are established according to the activity load and complexity in each public entity, by its leader.

3. The Organisation of the
Internal Function of the Audit

After signing the European Agreements for accession in 1993 and submitting the application for accession to the European Union in 1995, Romania received recommendations with regard to the organisation of the audit activity.

First of all, the financial auditors were set up by the issue of the *Government Emergency Ordinance no. 75/1999 concerning the financial audit activity,* published in the Official Monitor no. 256 on 04.06.1999, which was subsequently approved and completed by the Law no. 133/2002, published in the Official Monitor no. 598/2003.

Then, *the internal audit and the internal control* are set up and introduced for the first time in the control and audit system in Romania, by the *Government Ordinance no. 119/1999 concerning the public internal audit and the preventive financial control,* published in the Official Monitor no. 430/1999, approved and amended

by the Law no. 301/2002, published in the Official Monitor no. 339/2002.

The evolution of the internal audit activity in Romania, corroborated with the recommendations of the European Commission was materialized in the issue of the *Law no. 672/2002 concerning public internal audit,* published in the Official Monitor no. 953/2002, which thus sets the status of the *function of internal audit* and of the *profession of internal auditor* in the entities in the public system.

On the basis of the law, the following units have been constituted:

- *The Central Harmonization Unit for the Public Internal Audit*—CHUPIA, under the direct subordination of the minister of public finances;
- *The Committee for public internal audit*—CPIA, beside the CHUPIA, which is a committee having a consultative character;
- *the internal audit compartments* within the entities in the public system which have managed a budget exceeding 100,000 euros in the last 3 consecutive years.

By issuing this law, in Romania, approximately 1,800 out of the 2,400 public institutions had the obligation to set up internal audit compartments (directorates, departments, offices, compartments), and which include more than 5,000 positions of internal auditors, out of which, at present, only approximately 3,700 are occupied by internal auditors.

The purpose of the CHUPIA within the Ministry of Public Finances was to organise the implementation of the internal audit in the public system in Romania, at the recommendation of the European Commission.

According to the normative framework, the tasks of the CHUPIA are the following:

- to elaborate, run and apply a unitary strategy in the field of public internal audit and to monitor this activity at national level;

- to develop a normative framework in the field of the public internal audit;
- to develop and implement uniform procedures and methodologies based on international standards, including the internal audit manuals;
- to develop the methodologies in the field of managerial risk;
- to elaborate the Code concerning the ethical conduct of the internal auditor;
- to approve the methodological norms which are specific to the different fields of activity in the public internal audit sector;
- to develop the system of reporting the results of the public internal audit activity and to elaborate the annual report, as well as syntheses based on the reports received;
- to carry out public internal audit missions of national interest with multi-sectorial implications;
- to check the observance of the norms, instructions, as well as of the Code concerning the ethical conduct of the internal auditor by the public internal audit compartments and it may initiate the necessary corrective measures in cooperation with the leader of the concerned public entity;
- to coordinate the recruitment and professional qualification system in the field of the public internal audit;
- to approve the appointment/dismissal of the heads of the public internal audit compartments within the public entities;
- to cooperate with the Court of Accounts and with other public institutions and authorities in Romania;
- to cooperate with the public financial control authorities and organizations in other states including the European Commission.

Besides the *general norms of conduct of the internal audit activity,* also *the norms of management counselling* have been elaborated, in a distinct manner, by means of which the internal audit comes to support it, for the identification and in depth knowledge of the functioning of the internal systems which are so necessary to the line management, which is responsible for their implementation.

Taking the tasks of the internal auditors into consideration, we mention that *the internal audit has to be seen in the mirror with the internal management and control system within the entities.*

By means of the activities it conducts, the internal audit adds value to the audited entity by the analysis of the risks associated to the auditable activities and the assessment of the internal control system, as well as by the recommendations included in the internal audit report, drafted and forwarded with a view to ensuring the attainment of the objectives of the organisation.

The receivers of the internal audit reports may or may not take into account the recommendations of the auditors, but they know they take certain chances when they do not take them into consideration.

The internal audit cannot issue a certificate that all the activities are protected or that there are no dysfunctionalities within the entity, even because of only one reason—*the relativity of the internal control*—which is its object of activity.

The isolated internal auditors are inefficient, their value is given by the value of the team, which ensures them the force they have to have available.

The internal audit is a function which has been continuously redefined along the years out of the wish to match the permanently changing needs of the entities. Focused at first on matters of accountancy, the objectives of the internal audit have moved towards the evaluation of the internal control system of the entities and towards finding the major risks of the entities in reaching the pre-set targets.

In the public system, the internal auditors have the major responsibility to the mass-media and the public, just like, in the *private sector* they answer to their clients. Thus, if the external control structures should find deviations from the normative framework, misapplications of funds or even embezzlements, the public may ask whether in that particular entity the *internal audit function* exists and functions, in compliance with the principles of the corporate government.

The leadership of the entities has to be effectively involved in the organisation of the management and internal control system

through collaboration with the *line management,* responsible for the assessment of its functionality in the organisation of the internal control, and with *the internal auditors*. The synergy between these components shall represent the value added to the managerial decisions and a guarantee of the fact that the pre-set targets shall be attained maybe even at performance parameters.

Based on these grounds, there is an imposition to constitute a *system of continuous professional qualification of the internal auditors* out of the need to overcome the phase of the *regularity audit* and to make the transition towards the *system audit and the performance audit,* which require a very special professional qualification, especially by an in depth knowledge of the auditable field.

In the public system, the professional qualification has begun to be organized since this very year and it has to be supported by the training of the trainers and of the structures which can ensure the elite necessities of training of the internal auditors—for example *The Centre of Excellency in the Financial Management and Internal Audit—CEFMIA,* which has its premises within the *Athenaeum University—Bucharest*, having the purpose of organizing activities with a view to ensuring the continuous professional qualification of the internal auditors.

The internal auditors' professional competences provide real benefits for the entity, through a systematic evaluation of the procedures and operations carried out in the entity, based on the audit standards and on the best practices.

A major concern for the internal audit, for the relation with the management and with a view to ensuring the independence and the objectivity of its activity, is represented by the systematic update of the *Internal Audit Chart*; a document which regulates the manner of conducting the specific activities of the internal audit within the entities.

By referring to the current state of implementation of the internal audit, we consider that Romania is on the right way, which comes in support of the creation of an efficient internal audit function at the level of the public entities, according to a good practice in the European Union.

In the context in which the internal audit activity is recognised as being a complex activity, we can state that, at present, we are in a *phase of consolidation of the internal audit function,* the proof being the conclusive results recorded by achieving the added value and improving the activities developed in the public entities, but also by making the management, in general.

NOTES

[1] Virgil Mihuț—Methodological Guideline for the development of the internal control in the public entities, website of the Ministry of Public Finances See: www.mfinante.ro (Last Accessed on April 16, 2016.)

[2] Virgil Mihuț—Methodological Guideline for the development of the internal control in the public entities, website of the Ministry of Public Finances, See" www.mfinante.ro (Last Accessed on April 16, 2016.)

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[*] Order of the Minister of Public Finances no. 946/2005 concerning the Code for internal control, which includes the standards of management/ internal control at the public entities and for the development of the managerial control systems, Official Monitor no. 675 on the 28th of July 2005.

The Future of Economics and Human Dignity: Economic and Theological Perspectives on the Meaning of 'Wealth' and 'Poverty'

Nelu Burcea

ABSTRACT: Human dignity is a concept which can hardly be confined to a unique field of inquiry, or be analyzed from a restricted scientific approach. In this paper I would like to approach the idea of human dignity through the lenses of economics and religion. The word "dignity" has wide and multiple applications, ranging in meaning from the concepts of freedom, reaching economic level by applying the idea of a welfare concept or feeling decent. Although, the term of dignity is not likely to be reduced to the economic arena, this paper draws attention—although not exclusively—to the terms of poverty and wealth. Poverty is generally regarded as important to human dignity, but what can be said about wealth? Considering the meaning of "poverty" and "wealth" in relation to human dignity, this research uses a general theological approach from the perspective of the Bible.
KEY WORDS: human dignity, economics, ethics, future, morality, human rights.

Introduction

Does the economic dimension have a profile that can be identified as dignity? Or, could human dignity be applied to the economics field? In this paper, I would like to bring in research three fields of study: the economy, human dignity, and theology which could be seen

through the point of view of two major sections: the first being the United Nations legislation and the second section, the theological approach. At the end of this paper, I would like to explore the idea of the future of human dignity and economic ethics.

Human Dignity and the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights we find several times the word "dignity" in different contexts such as: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."[1] In the context of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, freedom and dignity have been given to the person by birth, and it is not offered through political, economic, religious decisions or anything else. The term "equal in dignity" must not be confined to the economic aspect because "dignity", in broader terms, is approached as "the state or quality of being worthy of honor or respect."[2] In the conception of the UN Declaration, the economic needs for survival along with their implication upon human dignity are made obvious in the context of the compensation rights. "Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection."[3]

In the human dignity field the politic and the economic roles played by each political nation are extremely important because human dignity must be placed in a broader context including the education of the person in the process of understanding human dignity taking into account that "the quality of a person that makes him or her deserving of respect, sometimes shown in behavior or appearance."[4]

Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes the fact that "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well–being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances

beyond his control."[5] Most of these legislative directions could be meet in the economic areas, generally speaking, and in the context of poverty and wealth, if we talk more specifically.

Human Dignity in the Biblical Context of the Concepts of Wealth and Poverty

I would like to start by approaching these sections in bringing the theological element into the relationship with human dignity. Although the term "human dignity" couldn't be found in the Bible, we have found the idea of human dignity with the terms of freedom, rescue, salvation, etc. The biblical writings have tried to bring attention to the primary intention of the Creator to create a happy world in a perfect creation.[6]

A broad look at the biblical writings reveals two issues that could be seen at first glance as being in conflict with each other: the Old Testament idea of wealth and the idea of poverty that transpires in the New Testament writings. The two ideas are two major current concepts. The first concept which is developed more in Western Europe and the United States is the concept of the abundance promoted more by Protestantism. In this concept the religion means abundance, God is the God of wealth and His followers should not be impoverished. In this concept, it is actually materialized the idea of capitalism.

The second concept, has been promoted more in Eastern Europe, especially by the historical churches, Orthodoxy and Catholicism, and it is the idea that wealth and spirituality are not compatible, and in many contexts could be mutually exclusive. It is a concrete aspect of tension between West and East, found in religious discourse. Why is this tension between the two religious concepts, if both categories come with biblical arguments, meaning they cite the same source? For a better understanding we must deepen the source of origin, the Bible.

The Old Testament, which is the first section of the Bible, treats wealth as a blessing from God. If a person is faithful to God, wealth comes as a reward. It is an idea that goes from the vision that God's

faithful people live in one nation, have the same laws, and the same faith. The unity is more than the unity of doctrine, is the social and economic unity. It creates an interdependence between the individual and the people, between man and God, between listening and receiving wealth as a blessing. Being rich brings, in the Old Testament, the responsibility towards others who live around you, that are facing deprivation and disease. So, in the biblical context, wealth is limited, and it is to be developed in line with fulfilling social responsibility.[7]

The prominent characters of the Old Testament are strong people who possess material wealth and have a good image in society. We can call them "successful people". Abraham, Jacob, Job could be mentioned. All these three men are described in the Bible as owners of large properties. Later the promises of God to the Hebrew people are aspiring to certain properties, to a country where it is "flowing with milk and honey."[8] This concept is emphasized by God through what He offers or withdraw by that emphasize as important or less important.

The promoter of this idea, especially in the nineteenth century, is Max Weber, who remains famous for his study of the origins of capitalism. In his famous book "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism", Max Weber launches and supports the idea that wealth is a grace from God[9], dispelling arguments that traditional Christian religions still claimed otherwise. Another Christian group which promoted the same ideas has been Calvinism. Calvinist concept is the favorable view of wealth they haven't considered it as a sin, though they have emphasized asceticism in their teachings. According to Calvinists, God loves not only the ascetics but also He loves the rich who remain among the people and produce riches who have remained in the communities to serve others.[10]

Interestingly this religious group could manage the pressure of asceticism and wealth and in this way wealth becomes a functional role, namely to serve the community. This way of working can operate successfully in a compact company with the same interests and ideologies. As long as the community is given the tone of one voice, the system is operational. Noteworthy also is the satisfaction of altruism that is described in the behavior of Calvinism. As with

any idealistic group, here as well there is a desire for perfection and intercommunity love. This spirit is present in the first century of the Christian community when all of them "were together and had everything in common.[11]"

It is noteworthy how the early Christians, because accepting a new faith, a new ideology, manage to live in this system of "community."[12]

Unfortunately, much later the "system of community" is subordinated to the luxury and wealth system. In his book "About Luxury", Virgil I. Ionescu speaks about the conception of capitalism on the luxury. He quotes Werner Sombart, a German economist, and sociologist who argues "the birth of capitalism from luxury."[13] This argument is based on the idea that luxury has contributed in many cases to the conversion of the social wealth. Even if wealth has been associated with capitalism and not with Protestantism, it remains rather an obvious idea that capitalism was born and visibly stressed by Protestantism which has wealth and legitimized wealth.

Another author who has a contribution in promoting wealth is Gaetano Filangieri (1753–1788), an Italian jurist and psychologist, who had studied the idea of luxury seen through the point of view of economic policy. He talks about luxury, about "luxury good" and "pernicious luxury", giving it a moral tinge. Filangieri wants to discover the role of morals so he can shape the meaning of luxury. So, if the manners are good this means that luxury is good, if manners are bad than luxury is bad.[14]

I think Filangieri approach is very interesting. He deepens the idea that human character can influence the perception of luxury, wealth. However, I can remark a passive approach of the luxury influence on the character and manners. Contrary to this view, I think luxury, wealth are not inactive, harmless. Not just the manners influences the luxury but the other way around as well. They have something active, something that transforms the attitude and the behavior. In just few cases the poor man that become rich in a short period of time remains the same. Most of the times, getting rich, especially in a sudden way, transforms the person. Not a few cases were when the individuals reach certain levels of wealth or fame and they give up on family or they don't recognize their friends etc.

These cases remark, from ethical point of view, the role that wealth has in moral and social degradation of the individual.

In such situations you can ask the question about the influence of wealth and its impact on human dignity.

Human Dignity and *Wealth*

Although human dignity should not be linked to the material dimension but rather the self-esteem of the individual, we must recognize that the context in which they live and the intellectual and financial level of the individual are indispensable elements of living life in a holistic way. Yes, but perhaps the most important issue in terms of the correct approach of wealth is to reach a balanced and fair point of view about the influence of wealth, this approach would required to have an unbiased approach of both sides of the issue. Does the Bible has a positive approach to wealth? Certainly. Because the term wealth is a relative form of the expression "having" and that great wealth in a certain time or in a particular community might be insignificant, further I will define the term riches as "having more than necessary".

If we look at Jewish history, we see a very prominent thought on perceived wealth. They believed that riches were a sign of blessing and their acceptance by God.[15]

I believe that material possessions can provide a framework in which there may be safety by reducing stress factors, at least the mentally one. From here begins the accurate perception of human dignity.

Human Dignity and *Poverty*

The second conception of poverty and wealth is found especially in Eastern Europe. But it is quite widespread in the West, especially the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church. Being an idea promoted by traditional churches, in particular, it is contrary to that preached by Protestantism. The term wealth, interpreted from the Bible is

often spiritualized. Wealth and surplus are necessary only in the spiritual.[16] Even the idea of private property in based on other realities. The quote below is quite revealing in this regard: "In the Orthodox conception, private property is a manifestation that appeared from greed. Those who are possessed of this passion in reality are not the master over their property, but its servants and guards of it. Even if they give from something they have to those in need, they can not be worthy of praise, but they are still indebted with repentance for their whole life because all of the things they held in their hands could not be used by their brothers as well."[17]

This conception even if it looks a little bit exaggerated in a world centralized on selfishness, shows a lot of spiritual and ethic realities. If the world would be the one described here, the human position would be improved. Personally I believe that this conception, pretty hard to be applicable in the current world, remains still an ethic norm sustained by the Bible which we should take into account. Even if the church was many times balanced in terms of philosophy about poverty and wealth, this position did not involve a favorable approach if wealth or accepting collecting material goods, that was usually closely with injustice and greed. Such a point of view is also expressed by the authors Oliver F. Williams, C.S.C. and John W. Houck in the book *The Judeo–Christian Vision and the Modern Corporation.* They say Church has taught people, over time, that they must have sufficient means for their material condition in the world, but the accumulation of wealth, beyond this level of sufficiency, becomes a sin by avarice.[18]

The catholic interpretation of poverty is obvious in the positive approach. St. Francis of Assisi believes that the poor are the privileged category eligible for the divine reward, conception claimed by Bishop Gore as well.[19]

Michael Novak is a figure of the Catholic world and author of several reference books on religious approach of business. Although some of his writings he associates capitalism with greed, yet in his last writings he urges readers to embrace a printed system of democratic capitalism, including a market economy, a democratic form of government and a cultural–moral system that nourish virtues of which free societies depend on.[20]

May this trend be a subtle shift from the idea of Catholicism from the idea of blessed poverty to the blessing of abundance?

Where does the idea of denial of wealth comes from *though*? The approach of wealth repudiation is rooted in Jesus Christ's words and his attitude towards wealth. Is it possible that Jesus Christ hated that much material wealth? In the following paragraphs I will try to analyze the statements of Jesus Christ about poverty. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, your heart be also."[21] Jesus Christ speaks here about many realities. Man's preoccupation with investing profitably on the long term is visible. However, it is important to invest financial values in a safe place. Safety is also the biggest concern of our days. It is very obvious as well, the temporality of investment that we can benefit here. What does Jesus Christ wants to convey here? Should Christians be so indifferent to financial values? I think here Jesus Christ is addressing especially to Christians, telling them that they should use possessions, gifts, their talents, so that their accounting is done in heaven.[22] This manner of interpretation alleviate, even slightly, the seeming tension created here. I do not believe that Jesus Christ teaches Christians to be uninvolved, uninterested to material things, but I rather believe that Jesus Christ warns Christians to distinguish between the two worlds, the material and the spiritual, and to discern them choosing the spiritual one.

Another statement of Jesus is made in the same context with the words, "do not worry saying, 'What shall we eat?' Or 'What shall we drink?' Or 'What shall we wear?'. For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.[33] But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."[23] Does Jesus Christ launches here a philosophy of indifference to life? Should readers of the Bible be careless to the essentials of life? Certainly not. Jesus is not talking about "do not care", but about "do not worry". It is something else. A Christian with a strong sense of ethics will care not only for themselves but also for others. At the same time he will

not be desperate about his future, because these depends on God.[24] At the same time Jesus Christ reminds the listener of the reality of both worlds, culminating with the certain benefit of the one who chooses the spiritual world, but who will receive the realities of the physical world as well. From this expression it can be seen that Jesus did not exclude the benefits of material goods, but places them in the proper order.

Another statement of Jesus Christ, which can be used to emphasize a social category, in this case of the poor, is the statement in which He says He was empowered to proclaim the gospel to the poor.[25] Does Jesus Christ excludes the category of rich people? Is the gospel only brought to the poor? Certainly not. Then what did Jesus Christ wanted to say? It should be noted since the beginning that Jesus Christ was both interested in the poor as in the rich. Among His apostles were also rich people. Then there was the case of Zacchaeus who was a rich man and Joseph of Arimathea who was rich, too.

It is clear that the message of Jesus Christ is not exclusive, but inclusivist. He came to proclaim the Gospel even to the poor.

It is a form to demonstrate His interest in the right to dignity of every person whether the person is rich or poor. But if we spiritualize the term "poor", we will better define those referring to modesty, openness to God, decency etc.

The Future of Human Dignity

What could be the future of human dignity be seen through the angle of poverty and wealth? If the question seems quite simple the more complicated is the answer. I do not think it can be given an objective response to this question without making a comprehensive study on the mentality of groups from different regions of the world or without taking into account the importance of the elements of poverty and wealth, elements which might substantially influence the idea of human dignity.

The study of theological perspective on human dignity comes not to change the importance of business ethics or morality, but rather to appreciate the ethical approach and support it. The concern

for human dignity of the two areas, poverty and wealth, is one of the arguments that specialists could support regarding the union effort to promote morality. If we start from a different premise, that of familiarity with Christianity thinking, it is easy to come back with another argument to this goal. The theological confirmation of human dignity probably does not give a valuable addition, for it is focusing its value in its approach, but I think that it may increase the field of application in a receptive nation in terms of faith. Early references, since the time of the Jews exodus, come to show something of humanity great concern to the principles and ethical values and to the human dignity. Jesus Christ's influence becomes evident in the field to human dignity and morality, and the subsequent concerns of Christianity follows the same direction. In conclusion, human dignity, even if it is found as terminology in the Bible, it is confirmed by theology and by the large context of the Bible, remains an engaging study of eternal values, values that are current and that condition the economical demarche in the civilized countries offering a perspective of success. Human dignity in the biblical context is confirmed not only by God's concern for the welfare of the faithful, but it becomes proof of human concern of holistic development to be fully moral, spiritual as well as economic.

NOTES

[1] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1

[2] Cf: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/dignity (Last accessed on April 30, 2016)

[3] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 23.3

[4] http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/dignity

[5] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25.1

[6] This is easily observed if we analyze the expression of the Bible when "God saw good bu That" several times in the context of the creation of the world as we read in Genesis 1:24

[7] 1 Timothy 6: 17–19 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

[8] Genesis 3: 8, *Bible or The Holy Scripture*, published with the blessing of His Beatitude Patriarch Teoctist. (Bucureşti: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1997).

[9] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*. (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2007).

[10] Eduard Recordon, Philippe Tapernoux, *The Church or Assembly*, (Dillenburg: Gute Botschaft Verlag, 1993), 147.

[11] Cf. Genesis 2:44 "All the believers were together and had everything in common."

[12] Ioan Rămureanu, *Istoria bisericească universală,* (Bucureşti: Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1992), 24.

[13] Virgil Ionescu, *About Luxury*, (Bucharest: Omega Press '93, 1995), 88.

[14] Ibid., 125.

[15] William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary,* (Oradea: The Golden lampstand, 2004), 98.

[16] Cf: www.creştinortodox.ro (Last accessed on April 30, 2016)

[17] Cf. www.creştinortodox.ro (Last accessed on April 30, 2016)

[18] Oliver F. Williams, C.S.C., John W. Houck, *The Judeo–Christian Vision and the Modern Corporation,* (Indiana, USA: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982).

[19] D. Martyn Lloyd–Jones*, Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, Oradea: Christian Book, 2003), 47.

[20] Michael Novak, *Toward a Theology of the Corporation*, (Washington, D.C: American Enterprise Institute, 1981), 26.

[21] Matthew 6:19–20, *Bible*, Dumitru Cornilescu translation, (Chişinău: Interdenominational Bible Society of the Republic of Moldova, 2005).

[22] D. Martyn Lloyd–Jones*, Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, (Oradea: Christian Book, 2003), 441.

[23] Matthew 6:31–33, *Bible*, Dumitru Cornilescu translation, (Chişinău: Interdenominational Bible Society of the Republic of Moldova, 2005).

[24] Gerhard Maier, *Matthaus–Evangelium*, (Korntal, Germany: Hanssler, 1995), 222.

[25] Lucas 4:18, *The Holy Bible*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984).

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Section THREE

TEACHING & EDUCATION

True Knowledge: The Supreme Purpose of Current Christian Education

Adrian Gheorghe Paul

ABSTRACT: By true knowledge it is a necessity for humans, it is a longing and a fulfillment. It can not be achieved fully, only by the opening and the participation of man to God, the One who is the Subject that draws us to the true knowledge. If we understand that the truth is personified and fully incarnated into the divine Person of Jesus Christ ("*I am the Truth*" Jn 14:8), then by following him and His commandments and His Gospel's prescriptions, is a necessary object to follow toward achieving the full and satisfactory knowledge. Here, a decisive role occupies the Christian education, human formation after the image of the perfect model—Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man. Thus, we focus in this study on the formation of the new man in Christ through education, to understand the eternal Truth and to gain the true knowledge of realities.

KEY WORDS: *Knowledge, participation, truth, Christian education, new man, supreme purpose.*

Introduction

From the start, we point out that it is not so simple, nor easy to trace a synthetic situation, but completely, about what it means or implies the knowledge, the true knowledge of man, integrated in the Supreme Truth—Our Lord Jesus Christ, because of the complexity of the subject and the quantity basis concepts and arguments, either philosophical, or religious, or profane, involved. In an attempt to highlight such a situation, it can easily fall into sin

of being generic and not succeed while emphasizing the essential elements of theological–dogmatic, spiritual, moral, philosophical or rational logic order, which applies to various aspects of the human condition and to social life.

Knowledge is a necessity. The humanity can not live without the knowledge. The surrounding reality, seen and unseen, is the object of knowledge. We are the object of knowledge for others, but also, our own object of knowledge. So, we are speaking about the reality from the "outside" and reality "from within" us. Both the one and the other, deeply and fully meaning of the word, we discover, we discern it, in relation to the divine element, to the Supreme Being of God. He is the subject, in our knowledge process. He can never be the object of knowledge. Knowing God, as the object of knowledge with our minds, is one of the major errors of discursive thought, which is why it will reduce God to the level of idea, an unmoved motor, absolute principle, Monad, vital principle that, trying to define, skipping on what He is and remains always the same—The living God.

Of course it is not to condemn the mind's attempt to know God. On the contrary. Only that we must keep in mind the fact that the knowledge of God is a commandment that we know it from the Divine Revelation, revealed fully in his Son, made man, who says: "*This is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent."* (In. 17:3) We can therefore confirm, without any mistake, that the purpose of all forms of knowledge of the unknown within us and around us, is the knowledge of God, the only true and full knowledge, made by the Revealer, par excellence, Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnated. *"The only Son, who is in closest relationship with the Father, has made Him known" (Jn. 1:18).* This is why the knowledge of God is dependent totally of revelation and not of subjective meditation. We can not know God, only through the mind that is burned by discursive knowledge pride, continues until denying God. It is the failure of a mind that seeks to know God only with logical reason and reach to deny His existence, the mind becoming even the human self-sufficiency idol. Therefore it is requested to man, who is thirsty of knowing God, to know Him other than knowing things or other created beings. For if in knowing God we use only organs, functions and methods to knowing the relative,

God will remain forever the Great Unknown, the Foreigner to our existence, impossible to encase in our limited concepts.

Therefore, we have the duty to know God, who is inconceivable, unknown and unreachable, through the reason enlightened by grace, because we are talking about knowledge not only intellectually, but with all the faculties of the spirit, with the whole enlightened being of grace, the one uncreated of God. By divine grace, the human reason is seeking to explain all, God is revealing to ourselves, as the mystery that includes and justifies everything. He is the living subject in the highest degree, in His eternal being and we tend to know Him, but this knowing it is not linked to the need for information, but to the need of salvation. Therefore, the knowledge of God is a process that actively involves Himself, through revelation. We know God through His grace, according to His full and authentic discoveries, for our salvation. For He reveals Himself to save us: *"God, our Savior who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:3–4).*

1. The Truth and the Supreme Knowledge

When talking about "truth" and "knowledge" we understand all acts, employments and active implications of man, in its effort to implement in life and in facts, the prescriptions of God's Gospel, of God and of Our Savior, Jesus Christ and to sanctify ourselves, by acquiring the divine grace. Therefore His mission in this world is to reaffirm constantly the need to apply the Gospel's laws of Jesus Christ, in order to be formed in all systems and in all human societies, a spiritual progress and an human life adequate to the environment preparation for eternal life.

Certainly that the center of this trend and aspirations it holds the human being, more exactly the noble and sacred dignity of man made by "the image" of God and which is called to live the divine life in a perfect "resemblance" deification to Him. This represents the fulfillment from the man part of its final vocation, which is to respond concretely to the "invitation" that God makes to man, to assume the existence in communion with Him, in order to know Him.

In this sense, we say that religious knowledge is a revelatory and participatory knowledge, where the communion and the community have a determinant role. It is revelatory because it is opened to us the chance to a participatory knowledge to life of God through Jesus Christ, His Son, into / through whom we can tell God: *"My Lord and my God"* (Jn. 20:28). Here's how true knowledge indicates the purpose for which man was made, defining it in his own vocation: *"But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do"* (I Peter 1:15) . In other words, the knowledge of God meaning the continues entering into the mystery of Unspoken presence and communion with Him, being the same thing with perfection.

The perfection of the word good, fully shows the value also as good, meaning that is found as the revelation of God's gifts, as gifts of our life, regarded from the perspective of eternal life. And as in any gift, the Giver himself send us a call, which is a part of good's content, then God is revealing to us, we come to understand His love divine call, that He always says. *"For God so loved the world that He   gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (Jn. 3:16). We therefore have the sacred duty to value the gift received in the relation of love with God through our participation in life and His sacrifice. This shows the quality and unique and unrepeatable value of the human person. A human action faithful to the demands of Our Lord, Jesus Christ's Gospel, will always claim from the "supreme truth" of the divine Person, who said of himself: "I am the way, the truth and the life" (Jn. 14:6) and revealed fully to the human being, called to partake of all the gifts of God.

Etymologically, the notion of truth was given several interpretations. If we start from the Hebrew verb *"aman",* formed from the word *emet* (truth), it means fundamentally the fact of "being solid"," being sure" or "trustworthy." In other words, the truth is the quality of what is stable, tested, solid, you can count on, that you can support.[2] Jewish religious attitude does not admit doubt: Yahweh is sure, solid; He is the only one we can support. That's why are true the words he addressed to us through prophets, and they are received in faith.

The Greeks were more skeptical; They do not get easily things they have not seen. The word they use to describe the truth, ἀλεθεία, consists of particle deprivation αand the word λεθος or λαθος, which means forgotten, hidden, which leads us to understand the truth as something that has been revealed, brought from the hidden and oblivion. Incidentally, this attitude toward truth is opposite to the one that certifies the Latin term v*erita*s, which evokes rather a mystery.

The Slavonic language uses the word *istina* to describe the truth, meaning that is not just "what it exists" (in Latin *est*), but also which breathes (*asti* from the ancient Sanskrit).[3] To know the truth means coming into contact with a living reality. This is the meaning of truth and in Romanian language, religious origin term that expresses the ultimate divine reality, that God's personality, whose presence is evident in creation (cf. Rom. 1:19) and fully communicated in Revelation. So the truth designate both the absolute and transcendent personality of God, His eternal substance, that can not be changed or justified, but only asserted: *Oh my Lord, you are God and Your words are unchanged and hast promised your servant such a good*. (II Kings 7:28) and the discovery or revelation of God's personality: "Truly this was the Son of God." (Mt 27:54).[4]

Therefore, the truth is not an impersonal divine substance, or a religious or philosophical speculation content, but a personal existence that enters in history and becomes accessible to people. "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, full of grace and truth*" (Jn. 1:14). So the truth is not objectual, nor an abstract principle, but personal, it is a Person which manifests in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnated. In him, the fullness of truth is manifested integrally, because He *is the Truth* (Jn. 14:6; 17:17) and in/through Him, the truth becomes "epiphanic" fully discovered, personalized and personified *I am . . . the Truth* (Jn. 14:6). So the truth is not a dead capital, but it kindles his soul or, more precisely, gives life and still "life in abundance." And depends on the person, the truth is life and dynamism; After all, only the truth validates, remaining *the same yesterday, today and forever.* (Hebrew 13:8) can still say, *See, I am making all things new."* (Rev. 21:5)

Jesus Christ is the Truth in person: "*No one has ever seen God; but the one and only Son who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known* "(Jn. 1:18). His life and ministry is a true epiphany of Truth which is revealed through the work of the Holy Spirit, who confirms Christ and gives certainty to the Truth: "*When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, Who goes out the father, he will testify about me* "(Jn. 15:26). Therefore, substantial knowledge of the Truth means the actual entry within the Trinitarian Divine,[5] unity, as entry–communion–union, which makes possible the deification of man. For he who comes to know God's hypostatically truth, wants to live life "full of grace and truth" that flows in every creative and transfiguring act of his person.[6]

God's Word is "Truth" in love. The name "Truth" *I am . . . the Truth . . .* (Jn. 14:6) as that of the "*Word*" of God; *the Word was with God and the Word was God*" (Jn. 1:1) it is his own Son, because the Son is related to the Father as well as the definition is in relation to the defined[7] subject. And the Spirit is the conquering power that opens the depths of truth and it turns into love, inspiration, freedom and beauty. "*Love comes from God and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God*" (I Jn. 4:7). We can easily see that it is not a question of any change or any improvement of the one who loves, but rather a procession "of (ἐκ) God", a sharing of the Holy Spirit, who revived the one who loves to a new life, passing it in a completely different state of reality, gaining a new existence. The one touched by the scented grace of the Holy Spirit and came to love truly, has passed from the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of God, that has appeared in the new world of the Truth, where it can grow and develop; God's seed remains in him, the seed of divine life (cf. I Jn. 3:9), the seed of Truth itself and of true knowledge.

From the love where the truth is missing, on the other hand, is missing all the gifts that the Son dwells in it, is missing its cosmic contents, such as the belief from which the Logos or the truth disappears, is remaining nothing but an unconscious enthusiasm. But knowing the truth, the one who believes genuine, understands the change that was made to him: "*We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other; Anyone who does not*

love remains in death "(I Jn. 3:14). Mutual love is the only one that can be and is the condition of unanimity, of thinking unity between those who love each other in opposition to the exterior realities between people, which give just a similarity of thought, under which the world is based on life, science, society, state, etc.[8] The unanimity provides the basis under which the common confession is possible, meaning the understanding and recognition of consubstantiality dogma. In other words, in/throught this unanimity we reach the mystery of the Trinitarian Godhead, who gives eternal life. For "*Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him*" (I Jn. 3:15). And because the love of a brother is a kind of manifestation of divine power that radiates the one who loves God, "who does not have eternal life" is, in fact, the one that have not entered into the divine life of the Trinity and, as such, nor can love.

So, true love is the exit from empiric, and passing out in a new reality. Love for "another" is a reflection of true knowledge, projected upon him;[9] and knowledge is revelation of the his own Tri-hypostatic Truth in the man's soul, that remain in the soul of God's love for man: *No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.* (I Jn. 4:12). This clearly shows that man has acquired, in the work of the Spirit, by grace, a new essence, which is to have a personal communication with God, as between father and son, and to enter into personal communion with God, achieving the *confidence before God.* (I Jn. 3:21).

Absolute truth in love is known. Love for "brother–neighbor" is a manifestation towards another, a pass on another, a kind of infiltration in another, of that penetration in the divine life, that the subject itself found in communion with God, it realizes as the knowledge of the Truth. It is the love that brings together two worlds: mine, self, which *is deserted* (Phil. 2:7), and of "another", of the other one, who became my way , my own, personal, of existence.[10] And the greatness of this relationship, communion, is that here reveals the mystery, the mystery of the meeting, of the earthly image, passer, with eternal truth, which discovers love. And the end of love is: *like two, to be one*, a full unity, that "an ecclesia," a church. Here, in the Church, every I, becomes a whole by merging all, to one another in

an all consubstantial.[11] Thus was founded the Church or the "Body of Christ," understood as an objective revelation of divine love hypostasis. For this reason, the mystic John Scot Eriugena said: *Love is the bond through which all things link in an inexpressible friendship and in an indivisible union.*[12] And this is exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit, which caress through the joy of contemplation, which is everywhere and fills all the treasures of goodness, which gives life and lives and, through His dwelling, cleans the world of every stain.[13]

This means that truth is a revelation of God—The Trinity made to man, that is a revelation, a manifestation of which is found clearly and fully in the Church.[14] For truly is what it looks like. This means that we can call the truth as 'spirit' appearance, manifestation, revelation. In this perspective, the truth is identified with the Church. St. Gregory Palama says about this: *Those who belong to the Church of Christ are of the truth, and those who are not of the truth, are not of the Church of Christ.*[15] And it is perfectly right, for the discovery of God and man's adept with divine grace deifying are equally true. And this truth is identified and is connected to the Church, the only one that shares the sanctifying grace of God, by administering Blessed Sacraments. Therefore, anyone who falls outside true expression of the truth or anyone who breaks the truth, falls from the communion of the Church. Here is what says St. Palama: "Let us therefore hold all the traditions of the Church, written and unwritten, and above all, the most mysterious and holy custom and adept of the Holy and Divine Liturgy, where we are given the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. And all who does not confess and do not believe that the Holy Spirit spoke before the prophets, that the Lord incarnate gave us obvious commandments, that the apostles proclaimed that they had been sent by Him, that we received instruction from our parents and from our descendants, but instead they have started themselves any eres or they followed relentlessly on those who in a wicked way, they started the eres, we disown them and we give them to anathema."[16] As we can easily see, this text reveals that those who lose Tradition of the Church, receiving no discovered experience, but by their own speculation are trying to compile other Tradition, they are removed by the Church and by counted, of course,

the heretics. More specifically, the one who loses the true faith and breaks the bond with Christ, corrupting the truth of the Church and distinguished itself from the theology and life of the Church, is godless, and the lack of God is His ignorance and implicitly, is serving a God, different from the one who discovered us.

So the truth is identified and is closely linked to the Church, and the Orthodoxy is the true faith and the true Church, because in it man's salvation is assured. Ensuring the believer's salvation results from the salvation and living true faith, the right faith. Faith is the bond that makes arise unmediated, perfection and supernatural union, of the believer with God, in which he believes. Because faith is aimed at the salvation of souls: "*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned*" (Mk. 16:16). Hence it is clear that those who lose faith, orthodoxy or true faith, lose also the union with God, deification, and split from the Church, which is the Body of Christ. Therefore, the Orthodoxy is the Church, the one who has the truth, the true faith of the Church, which retains true and sure art of healing and can guide man to the true knowledge of God, who is in communion with Him. In a word, the Church has the truth (I Tim. 3:15) and it is the only one offering man's guidance to the deification. In this way, the Orthodoxy is the Church simply.

I do not think we say great things and without support or coverage. Even I confess, that few people know today, that the Orthodox Church is nothing other than the Church that kept unbroken authentic teachings of Jesus Christ, teachings given to every generation of believers and lowered by the Apostles, clarified and expounded attentively to their offspring lawful, divine disciples of Apostles and church fathers, taught and kept by the Eastern Church, which is the only capable to prove their right to be called "Orthodox Church". The Divine Founder of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, made it clear that *I will build my church and the gates of hell will not overcome it* (Mt. 16:18) and admonishes *the whole truth* heralding the future (Jn. 16:13), shielding it from wandering. Truly it did all this over two millennia, proclaiming to people this truth, that God came into the world, *to testify to the truth, and everyone on the side of truth listens to me* (Jn. 18:37). St. Paul also testifies

and says: "*The church of the living God is the pillar and foundation of truth*" (I Tim. 3:15). It follows that the true Christian church always existed on earth, and will exist until the end of times. It received the promise of Christ before His ascension with His body to heaven: "*I am with you always, to the very end of the age*" (Mt. 28:20). Can there be any doubt that the Lord refers to the Church here?

Any healthy and honest judgement, every work of a clean conscience and anyone knows the history of the Christian Church, moral teachings and theological clean and undistorted of the Christian religion, must confess that there was a true Church, founded and supported by our Lord Jesus Christ and that it kept His holy and unchanged Truth. Moreover, the history shows a bound of grace, that can be drawn, from the Apostles to their successors, where, the saints are living testimonies of sharing the source of grace and savior Jesus Christ. And since truth is given once and for all, our duty is rather to assimilate it, than to discover it. The true Church seeks to serve God and to save souls. However, from this perspective, we have the commandment to strengthen ourselves and others with Truth, in Jesus Christ, the fullness of divine truth.

2. The Supreme Knowledge
and the Fruit of Christian Education

In the area of Latin and Greek spirituality and in the area of Christian patristic, the concept of education is, generally, almost identical to the concept of culture; often these concepts are identical. Παιδεια or παιδευσιζ same term means education and culture, both derived from the root of the word "παιζ" which means "child".

In modern times, these notions are not covered and are not always dependent one on another. In our language, "being educated" does not necessarily imply culture and "being religious" does not also mean to be educated. For culture does not mean only the presence of a baggage of knowledge and lifestyle, automatically different from other ways of life, but pursuing the culmination of a long process of education began in childhood and progressive enhancement whole life through knowledge, lectures, experiences

and free effort and consciously to become better, more useful. It is true that education and culture resemble each other and sometimes identified by the fact that both involved a selection process and were the result of such a process.

In this process of education, Christianity holds an important role, who could not fulfill in history, and the cultural and moral progress of humanity so prominent if it had not fulfilled a pedagogical role. Religion is the mother of mankind's education, classical school of formation of moral and spiritual perfection character of man and human society.[17] And because religion has made mankind's first education and the purpose of education is the virtue or the strength of character of morality, the Church pays great attention to Christian education, even education is a fundamental concern of the Christian Church. Church is the one that determines the educational factor to guide and lead man for clarity on him, toward peace with nature and toward union and knowledge of God. To do this, in the church, education aims to develop and representation as discerned of the image of God in man, up to full brightness similarity with God. For this purpose, the education in the Church is meant to raise man to know himself, the divinity knowledge and nature and the knowledge of a pure and holy life.[18]

In his major work, *Didactica Magna*, J. A. Comenius said that the ideal education is eternal life, that the religion is the perfect means by which we achieve human improving, society's perfection and eternal bliss in communion with God. Also, he starts from the idea that the model of all educators is Jesus Christ as Man, He is the most enlightened Teacher, holiest Priest and most powerful King. Therefore the Christians must be *brought there to be enlightened in spirit, holy in conscience's inclinations and strong in deeds*.[19] This goal can be accomplished through education and personal virtue. For in Holy Scripture is the Word of God, His works are seen in the world, and the man's soul has in it divine inspiration.

Christianity is a system of perfectibility, a method of spiritual improvement, which envisages the synthesis of good, truth, beauty and the sacred, in the human person. Through education, man shapes and ennobles his character. The character is about the person.

Created by God, being holy and having a certain value inside his core, the person has a free and creative will, which manifests itself as a system of actions, so that an empirical character. To that end, the person is character,[20] and the human character is formed through education because man is perfectible, trainable. Therefore we say that education is aimed at human perfection, perfection consisting in love and holiness.

Being human means to be a perfect character, a moral personality. But moral character is not formed at once, because the will itself gradually develops. Everyone is born with a complex of psycho-physical endowments and lives in a certain environment. The moral character is a permanent conquest, based on the unrelenting effort of will until the moral personality is made up, which is the supreme incarnation of the moral ideal. Moral personality is the goal towards which all human efforts are lead, feeling that is the bearer of eternal values. Therefore the moral personality embodies, personally, the good, in a consistent and harmonious development of all beings and in creative participation to moral life of mankind by holiness, completely understood, morally. Or, perfection of character and moral personality, is made through education, which is the initiation into life and Christian teaching, which ultimately leads to holiness.

The unsurpassed model of holiness and divine perfection, incarnate in human form is Jesus Christ, the perfect man and teacher of mankind, man model, educator par excellence, and unique teacher of the truth: *But you are not to be called Rabbi, for you have one teacher: your Christ!* (Mt. 23:8–10), who gave Himself for instance that" as I have done for you, that you should do "(Jn. 13:15). Nobody discovered us and not taught better and more beautiful the true meaning of life, nor the perfect methods of education, as taught, by Jesus Christ. For this St. Clement of Alexandria refers to Jesus Christ as *the educator, par excellence, of Christians.*[21] All people who tend to perfection, learn from Jesus how to gain salvation, how everybody must make efforts to achieve the salvation of his soul and body to perfection, the sanctification of the whole man.

The universality of Christian education results, from the universality of salvation. Supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary

was brought to the whole human race, that was fallen into sin. By His Divine Resurrection, the gates of paradise have opened for all children of Adam. After the restoration of man by Jesus Christ, all people have a right to salvation, on condition that every man to trouble himself , through faith and good works, to be worthy to partake of the salvation brought by the Son of God. More so, since God desires all men to be saved (I Tim. 2:4). For this, Christian Pedagogy is the hand of man on the paths of salvation, can not leave aside the most people and deal only with little kids, only children. The Christian pedagogy does not specifically deal with intellectual and physical training, which is essential to children, but she puts all the interest especially on the moral perfection of man. This absolutely people of all ages need, and especially the adults. In this sense we can say that the whole Christian teaching is a pedagogy, the whole work of the Church is nothing but an effort to raise man to a better state, from a moral point of view. (Eph. 4:13) So, for this reasons of soteriological order, the Church is dealing with the education of believers of all ages.

Of course that education begins in the family and turn their attention first to the child, since his arrival on the world, the child does not bring a formed morality, but is only endowed with moral virtualities. The imperious duty lies to the family, to develop the moral core of the child through education. Parents have an important role in cultivating the moral qualities of children, by transmiting them, through counsel and example of their lives, the moral skills and the first elements of the education. At this urges the Apostle Paul: *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord* (Eph. 6:4). But this is really an art, to form the child's soul and mind of the young. In this respect St. John Chrysostom says: "*Which art can be equated with the art of educating the soul of the child, to shape the young's minds?*[22] In the sanctuary of life, which is family, the man since he is young or child, receives the first crucial notions about the truth and good, develops healthy the capacity to become aware of his dignity and prepare to face his unique and irreplaceable destiny in the world and society.

Between the members of the family, of course, founded by marriage, is born, a kind of perichoresis, the meeting and sharing with one another,[23] the family becoming a synthesis, and her mission in the society, a symphony. For the members of the family receiving Christ who unites them, inhabit together, configuring one after another, resting spiritually each other,[24] and enrich each other through love. So did God. We are born, usually, in a bipolar matrix (parental couple); we continue the great adventure of our existence, becoming ourselves polarizing figures, male and female, self-conscious psychosexual identity; then we aspire to the archetypal structure (male–female), based on polarity principles, on complementarity, seeking the partner with which to develop (sexual, emotional, mental and spiritual), one through the other.[25] Therefore, the family is the gravity center of Community existence, the first and most important in this respect, while being common to people who comprise it, different from other people, absolutely unique, just as each person is unique and each conjugal being is unique.[26] Therefore natural family focuses on all values through which affirms itself and sustains life, it shapes the original skills, the man's soul and body, as do to the existence of good, to increase and to be transmitted from generation to generation, as forms of culture and civilization.

Maybe that's why God has allowed to be born, to grow and to form children in families. Here, the role of parents in raising and educating children in virtue, requires an imperative of salvation: "*For the children come into the world not only to support parents at elderness, but for them to learn the virtue from their parents*" (27). Parents are true teachers of children, which are rooting in their hearts "profound love'' through education.

From the bosom of family life, through a long and arduous learning process, all ages benefit: youth here develops, mature age here ensures its fecundity of elderness, family allow him a supplement of hapyness, a support, an extension of thanksgiving for won victories in the tumult of the elders existence. Therefore, if we look at the importance of family in general education process, both for individuals and for society, and we find that the family is the man, and its functioning means life, is to realize that the truths that underlie at the basis of the family life and Christian education, must

be regarded as having an absolute value that we can not repudiate, without repudiating ourselves, our humanity and nature.

From the religious point of view, the family is the training lab or rather, of discovery, for the child, of the divine–human universe. Not coincidentally, the popular wisdom speaks of the "seven years of childhood" that leave their mark on everyone, for life. It is understood that the religious education received at school or in society can not be effective unless the family atmosphere, the environment in which the child lives, enter into confrontation with the heard and seen ones. For instance, if at school, at religion classes, children learn that it is a mistake, a sin, before God, the adultery, to steal or to lie, and at their parents they see the opposite, then their confusion would be hopeless. Equally, the exercise of prayer, of the Christian behavior according to the biblical precepts, or applying the teachings given by the Savior through His parables, however all these will never be efficient for the education and a child's life if they were not staged, repeated and lived daily at the existential mini-laboratory level, which is family. And this can not be achieved without close supervision of parents.

The example of the parents has a decisive role in shaping children's religious habits, translating into concrete vivid acts, the abstract formula of debt. Thus, parents should do their prayers with the children, be taken regularly to church, learn to make the sign of the Holy Cross, kneel, sing religious songs, to bring gifts to the Holy Shrine, to light candles for the living and the dead, as often to partake of the Holy Mysteries of Christ, and, thus, to be among the faithful. This is also because the Christian family is included in the mission of the Church; It is an extension of the Church in the world and bringing the world into the Church.

It is no longer a secret to anyone that in today's world, in modern and modernized societies, most young people prefer not to marry, opting for passing relations, unconventional—marriages for a day, or rather of "one night" or "on probation," celebrated around "Valentine's Day"—and without social commitment (to children, for example) or irresponsible, symptom of reverting to traditional, Christian and secular values. Because more young people today are asking: "Why marry?" And this precisely because nobody opened

their eyes in this regard. Not infrequently young people see that their parents no longer love eachother, get divorce, or that they live together only because of social conventions; to deceive each other, or one is cheating and the other is suffering and leaving himself to drunkenness, discouragement or depersonalization. Such families, of course, represent nothing attractive. And then they ask themselves questions like: "That's a family?" The answer unequivocally: "We do not need that!" They deny the family whose image they know, and they're right. Who would choose to destroy their happiness only to be like the others, to be among the world? In a theological vision, this phenomenon appears as an ultimate consequence of sin, understood as a waiver of any responsibility before God and the human community.

A process as seriously is the rapid dissolution of most families conventionally constituted, sometimes even formally passed through the ritual sacrament of matrimony. The fact is all the more painful, the more of marriage seems to be understood in its size, by the ascetic commitment for the realization of a communion of increasingly perfect among family members. Marriages crumble for reasons as ridiculous and superficial as for that contact, betraying, most often, pecuniary interests, confusion between eroticism and love, untamed passions, instability of mind, etc.

In these cases, no more talk of the traditional family, carrier and guarantor of values, of practical wisdom and much less about a family able to propose and support the leap to the superior survival to all family members, in the likeness of God. Moreover, it seems that what until now was known as "basic cell" of the social organism, the family can no longer perform any real function, social body basing only on individuals. But the matters of concern here is the loss of the family of its educational function. Theologically speaking, this loss is a consequence of abandoning the grounds of Christian life and family.

Starting to be a factor of education, families or even casual relationships produce constantly children, who increasing without receiving the easiest parts to build a decent life, unwittingly contribute to amplifying the drama. Because almost completely devoid of axiological and ethical criteria, children and youth now,

bewildered, indifferent to those around them and deprived of a sense of personal responsibility, contribute to modern society—which declares to be in transit to a post-Christian era—and return to the era of migrations beyond the myriad of civilization.

In this context we are witnessing a reversal of educational values, where the moral law is discredited and in which man tends to become (or even became) a servant of matter, cold and metallic character of technical civilization, quashing the soul and last sigh after God, the Church is called to do Christian education and through it to guide the spiritual children, enrolling them on the path of holy love. This is because in a desecrated and secular society, like the current one, only the Church can make religious education because it is the place where believers are sharing the life and truth of God, where all are united in the "mystical body" of Lord, embedding responsibly and saviour through Holy Baptism and where they receive as food his divine body broken on the cross and His shed blood as a clean sacrifice for them in the deepest humility and love. In this sense the Church is and must remain preoccupied with moral, behavior and salvation of its children's soul, the educational issues raised by today's society; it must remain deeply rooted in the practical life of its members, looking towards the divine, developing always moral and educational values as virtue, developing a sense of duty and responsibility, and worrying about the big problems that arise within the current society: justice, peace, family, person, society, solidarity.

The problem of the educability of the human person depends of the anthropological conception, namely the idea that somebody makes about human being and purpose or mission of the man. Karl Weiss, the german teacher says, rightly, that in a way he conseive the theory of education a materialist, in another way a deist, in other a pantheist, a believer and a Christian otherwise.[28] In other words, the types of education differ by type of anthropological conceptions. If we go further, we can state that in Christianity, the types of education can be classified after confessions; one education receives an Orthodox, other education an Catholic, other education a Protestant. In this sense we say that the great Church Father, St. John Chrysostom, has a conception of man and education, eminently the

orthodox Christian. He has a very high opinion of man. For him, the man is more honorable than all beings seen. *Nothing is so precious that man; the whole world did not equals him.* God made all because of His love for people. He created all humans. If anyone should carefully investigate all the Creator commits every day for us, he would find an abyss of His love for people. Its privileged situation of rational and ruling the world being, man owes the love for God's people.[29] Perfectly true statement, as in human being, where it meets both the spiritual and the material part, contain the entire creation, which is why it is called "microcosm".

Such a conception of man, not only it makes possible the education, but requires just as a necessary. The symbiosis of body and soul requires collaboration in the sense of mutual perfection. Unlike God, who's work in education can not be applied, because He is unchanging nature, can be applied to humans, because is changing its nature and because the educability is integral nature to human being. But we understand that the education is not a simple increase in certain sense of the man. Education is a systematic work of the whole human beings to awaken, develop and strengthen all internal powers in a free and conscious way to get to know the Divine. St. John Chrysostom has the merit to underline in his works, repeatedly, that man is free and conscious subject of education, because it is endowed with reason and freedom of choice.[30] At the same time, he is convinced that good will overcome evil. The struggle is hard and long, but the result can not be doubtful. The transformation of a human being fallen into a person with purple robe with a crown, is something extremely difficult, but still possible.

Therefore, education is a fundamental duty to man, it aims to make from man a moral being just and pious, being a high and noble art, because it is done also to the future world. There man will know the whole truth, then his eyes of his soul will open and will see clearly the fullness of the soul of whom he believed and followed in this life, weaving the garment of virtues after the Perfect Image of the Immortal and forever alive-Jesus Christ" *our Easter* ".

NOTES:

[2] *Cf.* Tomas Spidlik, *The Spirituality of the Christian East. The man and his destiny in russian religious philosophy*, (Romanian translation by Maria Cornelia Ică jr., Edit. Deisis, Sibiu, 2002), 70.

[3] See Pavel Florenscki, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, II Letter, (rom. translation by Emil Iordache, Pr. Iulian Friptu, Pr. Dimitrie Popescu, Edit. Polirom, 1999), 17–18.

[4] Pr. prof. dr. Ion Bria, *Dictionary of Theology*, (Edit. IBM of BOR, Bucharest, 1994), 10.

[5] *Cf.* Pavel Florenski, *The pillar and Ground of the Truth*, 53.

[6] *Ibidem*.

[7] *Cf.* Sfântul Grigorie de Nazianz, *apud* Pr. prof. Ilie Moldovan, *Love, Mystery of Marriage–Love Theology,* (vol. I, Alba Iulia, 1996), 48.

[8] Pavel Florensky, *op. cit.*, 61.

[9] Avva Evagrie Ponticul says: „*Love is the door to knowledge*" (Evagrie, *Le traite pratique*, VI, apud Tomas Spidlik, *op. cit.*, 83). Expanding his life through each other's life, through love for him, the person achieves "living knowledge" unseparated knowledge of reality, but imbued it. Thus, out of love we can not know any unit or truth. Because those are closely linked; they do not separate until love is missing.

[10] And because love is considered the principle of knowing the truth, it is the source and guarantee of truth, which is found in the communion of love or in Catholicity. By the force of this love, the entire reality and all truth appear united as a totality.

[11] St. Paul speaks of our "identification" to Christ through love, identification which does not destroy its own personality, but supposes: "*I no longer live, but Christ lives in me*" (Gal. 2:20). Love unites us to Christ and through Christ to the entire collective knowledge, with the universal experience of the Church.

[12] John Scot Eriugena, *De divisione naturae*, I, 74, apud Pavel Florensky, *op. cit.*, 67.

[13] See the rudiments prayers dedicated to the Holy Spirit: "*Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who is everywhere and all do it; Treasury of good things and Giver of life, come and dwell in us and clean us of all impurity, and save our souls.*" *Cf. Ceaslov*, Book that includes different prayers, ordinances and church services, (Ed. IV, Ed. IBM's BOR, Bucharest, 1990), 8.

[14] In the Church, the Trinitarian truth is revealed clearly. The truth is the contemplation of Himself by Other, a Third: the Father *through* the Son *in* the Holy Spirit. Because theTruth being, is the infinite act of Three in Unit.

[15] Sfântul Grigorie Palama, *apud* Mitropolitul Hierotheos Vlachos, *The Mind of the Orthodox Church*, (rom. translation by C-tin Făgeţan, Edit. Sofia, Bucharest, 2000), 61.

[16] *Cf. ibidem*.

[17] Ilarion V. Felea, *The religion of culture*, (Edit. Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Arad, Arad, 1994), 246–247. The famous French educator J.J.

Rousseau said about the role of religion in education in the following: "*Forgetfulness of religion leads to forgetting human debt. . . . Therefore we must not forget that the soul is as true temple of deity; that the supreme law is to love God above all and your neighbor as yourself; that no religion saves you from moral debt; only those debts that are truly essential; as intern cult is the first duty and that without faith there is no real virtue.*" (JJ Rousseau, Emil's Education, Book IV, ch. 354, in trad. rom. Gheorghe Adamescu, Ed. IV, Bucharest, 618). Also the great poet, thinker and German educator I.W. Goethe: "*The Christian religion is the religion incarnated in deity and is the highest gear that could and should arrive humanity*". (Ilarion V. Felea, *The Religion of Culture*, 249).

[18] In this sense Fr. Froebel writes: "*The most perfect conpletion that we, as Christians, see in Jesus and that humanity knows, it is the one of recognizing clearly and vivid in itself the prime basis of his being, which spontaneously and independently occurs by eternal stipulation, after eternal law, of eternal life and eternal creation. And this great and eternal perfection itself requires every man to become such a copy and an image of the eternal model, as he himself become such a model for him and for others. . . . Yes, this is the theme and purpose of the whole moral education: the representation of the infinite in the finite, the eternal in the temporal, of heavenly in the earthly, the divine in man, in human life through the care of the originating divine being in all aspects.*" (G. G. Antonescu & V.P. Nicolau, Education of humanity, Bucharest, 1965, 309.)

[19] *Cf.* Ilarion V. Felea, *op. cit.*, 247.)

[20] Pavel Florenski, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, 139.

[21] See Clement Alexandrinul, *The Pedagogue*, in rom translation by Pr. Dumitru Fecioru, in PSB collection, vol. 4, Edit. IBM of BOR, Bucharest, 1982.

[22] St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, LIX, VII rom. Transl. Pr. Dumitru Fecioru vol: Writings, Part III, col. PSB vol. 23, Edit. IBM's BOR, Bucharest, 1989, 695.

[23] P.S. Vasile, the Bishop of Oradea, "Guidance on the Marriage of Young Theologians" in *Mitropolitan of Banat,* no. 1–2/1983, 78.

[24] P.S. Vasile, the Bishop of Oradea, "Guidance on the Marriage of Young Theologians" in *Mitropolitan of Banat,* no. 1–2/1983, 78.

[25] P.S. Vasile, the Bishop of Oradei, "Guidance on the Marriage of Young Theologians" in *Mitropolitan of Banat,* no. 1–2/1983, 78.

[26] P.S. Vasile, the Bishop of Oradea, "Guidance on the Marriage of Young Theologians" in *Mitropolitan of Banat,* no. 1–2/1983, 78.

[27] St. John Chrysostom, *Homily X to the Thessalonians*, XIII, cited David C. Ford, The man and woman in the vision of St. John Chrysostom, Edit. Sofia, Bucharest, 2004, 106.

[28] Dr. Karl Weiss, *Die Erziehunglehre der Drei Kapadozier*, in „*Strassburger Theologische Studien*", Freiburg im Breisgau, 1903, p. 6.

[29] St. John Chrysostom, *Homily on Genesis* 8.2; 3.3 homilies; 10.7; *Genesis* 12.4 - Migne, P. G. 53, col 71,85,89,103 cited

[30] Pr. Prof. Ioan G. Coman, *The beauties of love to people*, 38.

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The Future of Distance Learning
for Theological Education in Romania

Daniel Fodorean

ABSTRACT: Romanian education system is in constant change, trying to distance itself from the communist approach to education, but also in fast integration with our contemporary new pedagogical methods. In the opinion of some observers especially careful on education, the changes that have occurred in the nearly 27 years since the fall communism in Romania has been too slow. Others believe that in these 27 years has made radical changes Romanian education. A kind of jumps from modern approaches to postmodern approaches, from traditional education methods in education, using innovative pedagogical methods almost most. Distance education has found its place in education specific legislation in 1995, but the first program of distance learning in higher education was launched in the academic year 1998–1999. In theology, the situation was even more different in that it was only in 2005 launched the first distance learning program in the field of theology. This article aims to evaluate and demonstrate that the distance education in theology is the only possible path of development, thus ensuring the future for training religious ministers in Romania.
KEY WORDS: theology, education, distance learning education, online education, university

Distance Learning General Considerations

Romania is a former communist country that has had an important political change following the popular revolution of 1989. This led to the commencement of the democratization of the Romanian

society among which was counted also the education. At least the theoretical level, education is a national priority, but practically education system faced many organizational and legal changes and did not receive adequate funding. Pre-university education system in Romania is organized on several educational levels: preschool (0–3 years old), preschool (3–6 years old), primary (grades 0–4), middle school (grades 5–8), high school (grades 9–12). University education is composed of undergraduate studies, master, and doctoral studies and almost all of these can be followed in the residential, part-time and distance learning programs. The first law of education, after the beginning of democracy in Romania, launched for the first time formally distance learning education[1] as a possible form of study. These provisions represent is a serious turning point in the approach to education in Romania, opening the possibility that in addition to traditional education and modern education to exist, even if it took until 1998/1999 for a first university degree can be studied in the form of distance education.

Even if Western countries this form of education there long, University of London was the first institution in the world offering programs for distance learning since 1858 in Romania "the first university in Romania to offer this alternative was Academy Economic Sciences in Bucharest in 1998, and a year later the University of Bucharest launched a similar offer."[2] Distance education as a way of study has not been implemented at all in the pre-university education system, being present only in higher education. Areas, where such programs were implemented for the first time, were the technical and economic one, but humanist sciences opposing resistance at first.The total refusal came from universities that prepare students in health care (nurses, doctors, pharmacists, dentists, etc.) without even trying a combined form of residential courses and online courses. In this group of almost total rejection of distance learning joined, as an opinion, even theological schools in Romania, convinced that students may not have adequate training in this form. Currently, in Romania, most universities offer distance learning programs for some areas, both undergraduate, and master programs. After 10 years since the launch of the first program of distance learning in Romania, according to statistics from 2008,[3] the

number of students in these programs has increased very quickly reach 260 911 in public education, or nearly 30% of all students and in private education were 106 335 students representing about 48% of the total number of students in private education. So, we can notice a greater openness to innovative pedagogies at private universities, all of which were founded after 1989, and rapid increase students, in public universities, interested in distance education. This showed that in Romania, as in other countries, the trend in education is increasingly embracing distance education. After 2009, the student population began to decline. According to Mariana Bichir, "Romania started in 1990 to more than 200,000 students across the country, and reached its peak in 2007 when they were enrolled in public or private schools of about 907 000 young people." Such as "the number of students has dropped sharply in recent years: from 907 353 people in 2007, total crashes by almost half –464 592 students enrolled in higher education system in 2012."[4]
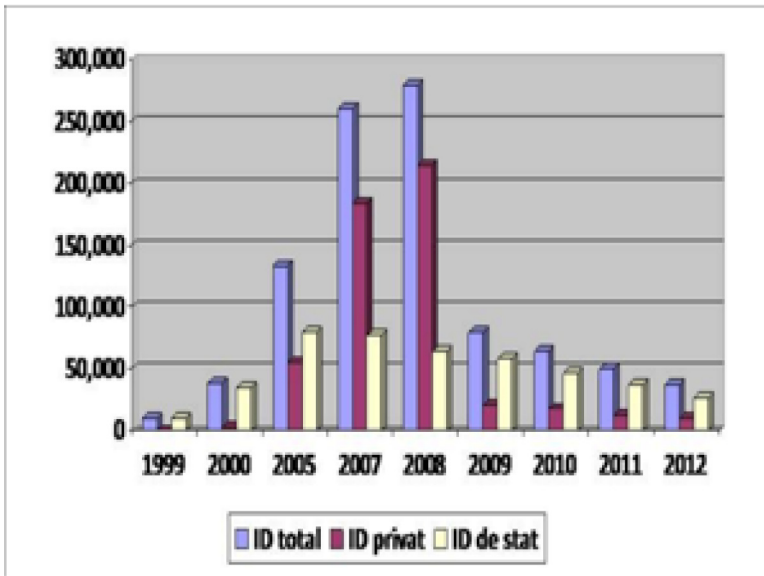
The graph above shows how this decrease in the number of students affected significantly even distance learning. Bara violet represents the total number of students in distance learning and bar garnet is a represent total number of students who are integrated into distance

education in state universities, and the yellow bar represents the number of students integrated into distance education in private universities. The main reason for this decrease in the number of students is that increasingly many students failed to pass the baccalaureate exam for high school completion which prevented them to be admitted as students at universities.

Besides the issue of education in Romania philosophy, and history of distance education, which were discussed above, need to be considered and also the legal aspect regarding distance learning. According to the two laws of education adopted in the last twenty–two years, Law of Education 84/1995[5] and Law of National Education no. 1/2011,[6] the three existing forms of education today in Romanian universities are residential education programs, part-time education programs, and distance learning programs. Law of Education 84/1995 shows another organizational form of education beyond those three, namely education of evening classes, 'seral.' According to Law of National Education no. 1/2011 universities can have only distance learning program for the undergraduate and master's program may be in the form of full-time or part-time. Doctoral studies can be only in the form of full-time learning. Each distance learning program must be accredited by the only agency that has competence in this regard, namely The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Government and the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education have developed certain decisions for the operation and evaluation of a distance learning program, such as Government Decision 1011/2001, Order of the Minister of Education 6251/2012, and documents that relate to the organization of university studies in general, as Government Decision 1175/2006.

Based on whether educational, historical and legal, distance learning in Romania is understood as follows:

> 1) an alternative form of learning (Law 1/2011)
> 2) a form of organization of educational processes that provide students / trainees the opportunity to personally choose the place and time in which to train / educate themselves (OMECTS 6251/2012)

3) a training program whose components are dominant: the use of educational resources specific to computerized communications systems remotely self-training and self-assessment and tutorial system (Decision no. 1011/2001).

Such as "distance learning is a flexible form of education that gives students the opportunity to choose the place, space, and timing of benefit from educational services; to study individually and independently and benefit from instructional support / non-instructional respectively—the tutorial system."[7]

Distance Learning and Theological Education

Rapid computerization of society has influenced the education system. New information technologies and communication, changing insight educational practice, their implementation is regarded as one of the most important issues at this end of the century, raised to the rank of national policy. And this happens because "online education challenges widely–held educational assumptions and casts the traditional skills associated with teaching in a different light."[8] Even theological studies are no exception to these challenges. Of the 19 universities of Theology in Romania only one university, the Baptist Theological Institute of Bucharest offers a distance-learning program in theology.

Theological Seminaries worldwide train clergymen through distance learning. For example, a web resource of the US recommends those who want to prepare to serve the Orthodox Church as "there are opportunities for Distance Education in the Orthodox Church.[9] The Institute of Orthodox Studies makes words of high appreciation for distance education:

Distance learning was once a poor substitute for other forms of education, being restricted chiefly to private reading and occasional essays or examinations submitted through correspondence. This format, we are happy to say, is a thing of the past. The Institute's Certificate Program brings your

studies to live in new and creative ways. Since our Institute was founded, we have consistently worked to be at the forefront of Orthodox Distance Learning, and this has included developing and refining an extraordinary set of resources and tools, each of which helps to make the Distance Learning experience rich, interactive and a powerful medium for in-depth study of Orthodox Christianity.[10]

These are not isolated cases but "in the last 10 years, a number of distance education programs in Orthodox Theology have emerged, including three that are run by our own Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia."[11] Bishop Paul S. Loverde says that "Catholic Distance University is a paradox: it exists in order to eliminate distance. Its mission is to reach out to the ends of the earth with the message of the Gospel so that it can collapse that distance into encounter."[12] Leaders from "Baptist Bible Seminary offers online academic courses for every degree program, making your seminary education flexible and convenient."[13] All these facts lead us to conclude that Christian theology, no matters the denomination, it can be studied through distance learning programs.

What makes theological schools of higher education in Romania to be restrained toward distance learning? Without claiming to have a complete answer to this question, following the positions expressed by some Christian denominations or theological schools of Romania may conclude that there are two types challenges: conceptual challenges and institutional challenges. Surely every person and institution has the right to think freely, and this is because "when taking into discussion the issue of human rights and fundamental freedom , it is very hard to imagine a more fundamental freedom than freedom of region."[14]

Conceptual challenges have to do so with theology, and also with pedagogy. Briefly theological and practical reasons underlying not use the internet on large scale in formal and informal education are: 1) Fear of losing doctrinal accuracy; 2) Uncertainty as this means, the internet, and this method, distance education, have enough theological support in order to be used in the ecclesial area; 3) Theology is more focused on word than image.

In debates on theological distance education in Romania were raised questions as "We risk losing our scripts without tutors day? If you set up ID (*distance learning)*, will open the formation of a wave of theologians suspicious?"[15] One of the participants in the discussion was written that "those who currently do theology 'for their lives,' can learn any form of education, including the Internet, without the right to ordination."[16] Even if one can speak of an official position, these also shed hint that theological accuracy can be maintained only through the direct involvement of the clergy and church. Moving teaching and learning in a virtual space gives the impression decrease or loss of control over church doctrine. Secondly, among theologians exist uncertainty that this means, the internet, and this method, distance education, have enough theological support for to be used in the ecclesial area. All the actions described in the New Testament church seem to require direct involvement in the local community life of the believer, and in society. All the actions described in the New Testament church seem to require direct involvement in the local community life of the believer, and in society. However we see that church and some believers have been taught from a distance by the Apostle Paul through letters, which were nothing more than text theological, but these letters were used on the basis of direct knowledge, prior or subsequent writing and sending them. So we can say that the New Testament model is a combination of direct transmission and distance transmission of Christian teaching. The third conceptual element that can hinder the implementation of online education is that theology is focused more on the word and not so much on the image. God is immaterial and invisible and talked, and this speech of God is the basis of knowledge of God. This understanding has led to the belief that we can learn by reading theology books, the internet being a promoter not only of text, but also a promoter of images. In fact, there are no anti-theological images to use in relation to theology, Jesus Christ used in his teachings direct visual elements known to his audience.

Additional challenges include theological and practical issues that had been raised as reasons for not using distance learning. One of these is precisely the danger that the student is captured by this means, the Internet, and get to become addicted to it, losing sight

of other important issues for the life of a Christian, namely prayer, fasting, etc. Regarding the pedagogical challenges was more to do with the need to change the teaching style of professors. Professors of theology are generally ministers of churches that are involved in preaching, a specific form of proclamation and teaching. Moving from a traditional form of teaching an innovative shape and a different dynamic teaching as distance learning involves assisting teaching and acquiring a new skill set. Hede says:

> One of the most significant issues facing instructors designing and teaching online courses is the temptation simply to replicate as nearly as possible the traditional classroom model (Ruth 2006). Newcomers to the world of online education often assume that the content of their courses needsn't be altered to account for the new instructional context and that the subject matter will translate seamlessly from one venue to the next.[17]

In the second kind of challenges that hinder the distance education to be much more widespread in Romania are institutional. What are the challenges and opportunities facing higher education system, seminaries, and theological schools when talking about this new system of teaching and learning? Each institution must look in their own backyard and think what impact would such a system in the following we will explore the ups and downs of distance learning from two perspectives: that of the student and the institution offering this system. Issues such as funding generally represent the challenges, accreditation, and staff and students demand from such a program. Due to a system still quite bureaucrat is a program accreditation is a process quite difficult. According to Elena David "this educational alternative is not cheaper than resident learning as happens in most European countries."[18] We conclude that by solving these types of challenges, conceptual and organizational, would provide the possibility of distance learning in the field of theology to expand in Romania.

Alternative Theological Education in Romania
A Hybrid Model

To overcome the resistance that exists towards the implementation of distance theological education in Romania, and given the specificity of theological education, a solution would be to implement a hybrid model of online education and face to face education. Education face to face will take place at tutorial centers established in areas where students live. Education face to face tutorials take place in centers established in areas where students live. Even if 80% of the education process will ave place online, and only 20% of education will be through face to face meetings, this model will make the process of education to be more humane and more effective.

This model of hybrid model integrates best in the context of socio–cultural and religious realities in Romania and is supported by three arguments

1) Psihopedagogic Argument: A balanced student training is done both through interaction with the virtual world, but also by the real world.

People who walk in the distance learning student is called the virtual world, and by the term "virtual education is increasingly used in direct relation to the increasing presence of information and communication technologies in open and distance learning methodology."[19] From the Christian point of view, technology serves the man, but a man should not be the slave of technology. This can lead to the danger of addiction by the virtual world. In order to avoid this institution should offer the student learning experiences even in a real community in accordance with university professor Apostol:

> If the online interaction is used as a supplement to—or becomes a substitute for—texts, hours of class, lecture halls, virtual communities can pro-vocational re-lation fundamental changes in social and educational nature. Such a community

is only possible by technology on, but it is not animated by it. A virtual community life can occur only in human communication, but while the quality of this communication can be enhanced and developed through technology, it is fundamentally governed by human factors, not technical.[20]

Total absorption of the student in the virtual world could have negative social consequences psychology and the student, which would make the process of learning not to be so effective.

2) Theological Argument: Education distance is done in the context of real relationships between the one who teaches and the learner.

The apostle wrote his epistles, in almost all cases, by some person or church that has met them before or after writing the letter . This makes an observation of the New Testament believers in the church and education can be done in a combination of methods, distance and face to face. All this approach in perfectly with the mission of the church, and that is to make disciples, but this can be done by "go into all the world and make disciples" and it involves a real and direct connection with the person next servant respectiva. Forming the church is part of the process of discipleship.

3) Legal Argument: The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education required two face to face meeting for each class.

The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education regulated by the regulation on distance education as "Every discipline/course promotes at least two tutorials activities each semester developed through direct meetings, face to face (AT)."[21] Universities organizing distance learning programs have implemented this regulation, such as in Romania not only at universities that have programs theological, but all universities apply a hybrid distance education.

Tutorials and assisted activities through direct meetings may involve:

• Synthetic exposures are presented and explained basic knowledge of the subject;
• Synthetic exposures that are organized at least 2 times per semester for each subject in the curriculum during intensive training;
• One conversation and group discussions where students can inquire, explain difficult topics;
• Distance interactive communication via email and the Internet, direct subsequent meeting.
• These direct tutorials are scheduled on Saturdays / Sundays or during the week in the afternoon or evening, at a time of 2–4 weeks.

Conclusion

Based on the study conducted I found that even if the theology has a specific content, and perhaps approach tutorials, future ministers of churches can be trained through distance learning programs. Distance learning program presents itself as a hybrid between online education and face–to–face meetings organized tutorials for each course. Also, given that rapid development in Romania Information Society, Romania being among the countries with the highest speed internet, I thin distance learning education will expand and will include increasingly more and field theological. Future of education in Romania, in a largely belongs, will be distance learning education.

NOTES

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PEACE—A Vital Ingredient for a Society of Conscience: A White Paper on the Contributions of the Institute for Peace Studies in Eastern Christianity

Marian Gh. Simion

ABSTRACT: The relationship between religion as a source of meaning and the violent or compassionate behavior of the human beings is one of the vital ingredients of a Society of Conscience. While organized religions are viewed with suspicion, and accused to be the main sources of aggression, intolerance and divisiveness, the conscience of religious faith, as a devotional behavior, offers the key to a renewed spirituality; the cornerstone to a Society of Conscience. Therefore, this white paper focuses on the contributions of the founder of the Institute for Peace Studies in Eastern Christianity, in exploring the resources of Orthodox Christianity in order to advance compassion, and peaceful coexistence.
KEY WORDS: peace, Orthodox Christianity, education, consulting, research, politics, religion, economics)

1) About IPSEC

Following the end of the Cold War, religion became increasingly associated with death and destruction. From intellectuals to the common folk, people viewed religion as the main source of aggression, intolerance and divisiveness. Facing difficult questions about Orthodox Christianity, I easily ascertained that this subject was completely overlooked by the Orthodox seminaries and schools of

theology. Therefore, encouraged by several close colleagues, as well as by my wife, Denise Simion, I established the Institute for Peace Studies in Eastern Christianity (IPSEC) to help fill this gap. My vision for IPSEC was to focus on research, education, and consulting from a multidisciplinary perspective, simply because religion permeates all aspects of human life, and religious peacemaking can only become effective if taking a holistic and process-oriented approach.

Created in the spring of 2008, IPSEC was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on March 27, 2009. On April 9, 2009 the Internal Revenue Service assigned IPSEC the Employer Identification Number 26-4633958, and the institute was inaugurated on July 2, 2009 in Bucharest Romania. On December 15, 2013, IPSEC became a tax deductible 501(c)(3) entity under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, Section 170. Partnering with various organizations such as the World Council of Churches (Switzerland), the Institute for Theology and Peace (Germany), the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate (Romania), the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (Syria), the Association for Freedom and Conscience (Romania), the Parliament of Romania, and others, IPSEC successfully completed several projects including two international expert consultations in Romania (Bucharest, 2009) and Syria (Damascus, 2010), one international workshop during the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Jamaica (Kingston, 2011), and others. IPSEC published two scholarly books in partnership with World Council of Churches and with the Boston Theological Institute, and has established partnerships with the Faculties of Orthodox Theology of "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi, of "Babeş-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca, as well as with the Business School of the Athenaeum University of Bucharest, Romania.

In 2014 IPSEC became affiliated with Harvard University as a field education agency site for the Divinity School.

In 2016, IPSEC was reorganized so as to increase its effectiveness as an agent of change, and also to distinguish its own work from the work developed by similar organizations such as the International Orthodox Christian Charities and the Orthodox Peace Fellowship.

While Orthodox Christianity remains at its epicenter, the departure from an ecclesiastically oriented programming, along with

the adoption of a meta-institutional approach, became necessary for strategic and ideological reasons.

The manifestation of religious faith as a mechanism of conscience (including that of the Orthodox Christians) is no longer restricted to institutional and cultural confines, as it engenders worldviews that transcend organized religions and permeate all aspects of human life. Thus, to become effective and meaningful, Orthodox peacemaking—which is at the core of IPSEC's mission—ought to take a holistic and process-oriented approach to conflict, while also refining the self-understanding of the Orthodox Christians living in a globalized world; beyond the mental ambush of nationalism.

Partners

In order to implement this new vision and spearhead its work, IPSEC established various relationships with institutions mainly from the USA and EU, which impart similar goals. Currently, IPSEC has one permanent affiliation, three long-term partnerships, and several associations.

Affiliation with Harvard University

IPSEC is affiliated with Harvard University The Divinity School as an agency site for its Field Education program. Considering that authentic training for the ministry must include both practical experience and reflection on that experience, the Field Education Program at Harvard Divinity School was built around guided learning experiences that integrate theory and practice to develop professional attitudes. By exploring resources from Eastern and Oriental Christianity, IPSEC provides the students with training on inter-religious understanding and dialogue; religion and diplomacy; nationalism and pan-Orthodoxy in Russia and Eastern Europe; Orthodox Christianity in the Middle East, North Africa, and America; Orthodoxy and the ecumenical movement, and issues of restorative justice and conflict transformation.

Partnerships

IPSEC has established partnerships with three Romanian universities for the purpose of promoting academic and cultural ties, educational and research activities in all areas and disciplines offered at/or via the two institutions, as well as exchange of members and researchers, and student exchanges. IPSEC's partners include:

- "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi
- "Babes-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca
- The Athenaeum University of Bucharest, Romania.

Associations

In conducting its work, IPSEC has associated occasionally with various institutions from USA, EU, Middle East, Asia, and the Caribbean region. These associations took place both directly and via a third party, as driven by the nature of the common event or project. These included:

- World Council of Churches (Geneva),
- Institute for Theology and Peace (Hamburg),
- Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate (Bucharest),
- Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch (Damascus),
- International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (Geneva),
- The Boston Theological Institute (Newton Centre, MA)
- The Conscience and Liberty Association (Bucharest),
- Parliament of Romanian (Bucharest, Romania),
- International Religious Liberty Association (Silver Spring, MD)

2) IPSEC Research

IPSEC develops and conducts qualitative and quantitative research projects using a process oriented methodology I designed. This research methodology is interdisciplinary in nature and process oriented in structure; focusing on *inputs*, *meaning-making*, and *outputs*. While the inputs are treated as independent or causal variables, the meaning-making is treated as an intervening variable, and the outputs are treated as dependent, or effect variables.

Research on the *inputs* involves the analysis of the standard information imparted by the *institutionalized religion* concomitant with relevant *faith phenomena*. While the research on the standard information involves document analysis of resources such as sacred writings, doctrines, visual representations, engravings, polity, etc., the research on faith phenomena focuses on devotional sources of spiritual meaning found within the subcultures of the organized religion, which affect the believers' worldviews on evil, dualism, sacrifice, martyrdom, death, rituals, funerals, mythologies, taboos, and so on.

Research on the *meaning-making* process focuses on how the inputs are interpreted by groups and individuals in position of power, under conditions of crisis. The research process uses direct and indirect observations of devotional behavior, as well as surveys designed to measure the interpretative switch between *soft* religion and *hard* religion, on the ideals of religious life, social consequences, psychological tonalities and strategic action.

The *outputs* are the byproducts of the inputs' refinement through meaning-making, which generate new cognitive and affective realities. The analysis of the outputs is crucial because it reflects the institutional change which becomes visible in new public policies, new educational curricula, new perspectives on political theology, new pastoral guidelines, new symbolic acts, speeches, declarations, jurisprudence, and so on.

Data Gathering : Some projects developed by IPSEC involves data gathering in terms of surveys which are designed to measure and monitor the process of interpretation and meaning-making.

Publications: IPSEC offers several publications in order to disseminate information about its activities, partnerships, events, work-in-progress, as well as to disseminate the results its research.

> *a) IPSEC Newsletter* | IPSEC Newsletter disseminates information about our activity; selected information about the activities conducted by our partners and similar organizations, and selected news about conflicts affecting the daily existence of Orthodox Christians around the world.

b) Research Reports | Research Reports display the results of surveys and additional research conducted by, or in partnership with IPSEC.

c) IPSEC Books Series | IPSEC Books series includes monographs and edited volumes reflecting the activity of IPSEC and of its partners. IPSEC books include the following: *Religion and Politics: Emperor Constantine, Orthodox Church and Freedom* (edited by Marian Gh. Simion, Cristian Sonea) is a collection of papers on Orthodox Christian perspectives on faith, politics, and freedom. *Fear Not: Biblical Calls for Faith* (authored by Raymond G. Helmick, SJ) is a tightly argued exegetical study of divine promise and encouragement that focuses on meaning of fear in contexts of violence and peace. *Just Peace: Orthodox Perspectives* (edited by Semegnish Asfaw, Alexios Chehadeh, Marian Gh. Simion), is a collection of essays on contributions from Orthodox Christianity and its efforts to conciliate conflict, avoid violence, and stop war.

d) Round Table Series | IPSEC is a co-publisher with the Scientific Press, as part of the Round Table consulting program. Publications include thematic conference proceedings, journals, and books on general themes in arts and science, which signal the presence of religion.

e) Case Studies | IPSEC publishes various Case Studies to serve as teaching tools to the benefit of students and professionals.

IPSEC is also open to working with interested parties (organizations and individuals) in order to develop research projects on the power of religion in the public life. Although our work is global in nature, we focus primarily on areas where Orthodox Christians live, as well as on areas affected by the cultural, political and economic power of Orthodox Christian states. Please contact us, if interested!

3) IPSEC Consulting

Developing a society of conscience entails a successful consulting and exchange of ideas followed by action. This is because, the twenty-first century ushered mankind into adventurous, exciting, but challenging new horizons. The new power of computation made colossal advances in quantum physics, space exploration, and genetics—just to name a few—while the power of human imagination reached new summits. At the same time, mankind faces existential threats posed by an increased competition over resources, military rivalries, economic imbalance, environmental depletion, demographic growth, terrorism, wars and migration. The changing attitudes of the global scientific community toward religious faith— which incrementally abandoned diatribe and started accepting religion as a partner in the exploration of the unknown—demand new paradigms of communication between science and religion. Last but not least, the resurgence of religion as a global political force steers public policy in ways which can dramatically impact the existing relations between religion and secular governance, as well as between organized religions themselves, while imposing unanticipated restrictions against anything that would run contrary to its interests.

Therefore, in promoting peace and peaceful coexistence, IPSEC provides consulting services to leaders from the academia, religion, public policy, business and science.

Programs such as the Round Table and Preventive Diplomacy are geared toward the academic world as an effort to *anticipate* ideological conflicts and *prevent* them from developing. The "workshops" focus on *existing tensions*, offering training on "conflict transformation" and on building skills for "interreligious dialogue" to the benefit of communities facing unrest, while "religious diplomacy" training is geared toward Foreign Service officers and transnational business leaders. The "theological consultations" are settings where Orthodox theologians convene and discuss various doctrinal, ecclesiastical, moral, and liturgical issues of theological and educational interest. Last but not least, the "policymaking"

program offers consulting services to the policy world in general, which includes government, business and religion.

Consulting Programs

In order to anticipate and prevent ideological conflicts, IPSEC offers the "round table" program as a structural setting for the development of meaningful conversations between religious leaders and academics in general for the purpose of *anticipating* potential ideological conflicts. Once such potential ideological conflicts are identified, the "preventive diplomacy" program focuses on developing tools and solutions to prevent such ideological conflicts from erupting.

Round Table

Universities are laboratories for the formation of tomorrow's leaders, and as such, issues bearing the potential of religious influence, interference and obstruction, are addressed in an anticipatory fashion. Because collective violence is driven by economics and meaning, religion is an institution which defines the meaning of life and drives economic attitudes. Therefore, the "roundtable program" serves as a venue to engage established and promising world-class academics from arts and sciences, whose thinking and work affects the world of economics, business, politics, science and technology. For this purpose, IPSEC established a partnership with the Athenaeum University from Bucharest Romania, and a symposium program with the Scientific Press from Cambridge, MA.

Athenaeum University | IPSEC's partnership with the Athenaeum University of Bucharest was created to foster international expert exchanges, research and education in a global environment that is increasingly aware of the unavoidable presence of religion in business, economics and public administration. Research and education involve creative approaches to business ethics, awareness of diverse religious systems of thinking which drive specific attitudes

towards wealth, poverty, social responsibility, common good, ownership, banking, and taxation.

The Scientific Press | IPSEC has partnered with the Scientific Press to organize inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, and trans-disciplinary conferences, and to publish the work of the participants as proceedings, journal articles and monographs. The topics of these conferences include general themes from science and humanities which intersect with religious worldviews. The current series of conferences is called "Harvard Square Symposium," and it was named after the physical location of IPSEC in Harvard Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts. This symposium reunites promising and well established scholars in a creative environment to propose holistic ways of thinking by nurturing the engagement of the global intellectual elite into conversations meant to tackle the new challenges faced by the mankind. It is a conversation which attempts to go beyond the existing paradigms of thinking.

Preventive Diplomacy

Ideas lead to actions and actions create new ways of thinking (and acting), which often clash with the old paradigms. Fortunately, such conflicts can often be anticipated. IPSEC offers a preventive diplomacy consulting program which focuses on the geographic areas marked by the presence of Orthodox Christianity. The program is designed to take "diplomatic action" at the earliest stage, so as to prevent disputes from arising and potentially escalating into conflicts. Potential conflicts can involve various issues ranging from political ideologies and religious identity to issues related to science and technology, business and public policy.

Workshops

Religious peacemaking is not only a matter of individual conscience, but also a creative environment in which a peacemaker plays a significant role in the ecosystem of the public life. Therefore, in order to have an impact on the public life—the very place where decisions are made and action is taken—IPSEC offers workshops on conflict

transformation, religion and diplomacy, and inter-religious dialogue. The workshops are designed for specific audiences (e.g. companies, diplomatic personnel, professional groups, churches, clergymen, seminarians, parish councils, etc), as well as for the large public, for the purpose of training how to manage interpersonal conflicts and group conflicts, and how to reach diplomatic solutions.

Conflict Transformation Workshops: Anchored into the psychological dynamics of forgiveness and reconciliation, IPSEC workshops focus on developing the skill for conflict transformation and peacebuilding. Our method focuses on self-preparation, interaction with other players, and transformation of conflict, by involving proven techniques in combination with cultural factors.

Religion for Diplomats: Religion for Diplomats is a coaching program designed to train Foreign Service officers and transnational business leaders in the arts of political ritual, religious etiquette, religious protocol and diplomacy, and negotiation with religious leaders. The program emerges from my postdoctoral project "Global Religion Advancing Successful Policymaking," (GRASP), which I conducted at Harvard Divinity School during 2013-2015, and it is anchored into the theories, structures and practices of diplomacy, as well as into the role of religion in human affairs.

Inter-Religious Dialogue: IPSEC workshops for inter-religious dialogue are settings where members of different faiths meet in a bilateral fashion to negotiate their religious differences in the interest of the common good. The ground rules for communication involve the building of conversational skills on how to de-construct assumptions about each-other, how to realize that inter-religious dialogue does not mean betrayal of one's faith or conversion to other faith, and how to accept the reality of religious pluralism.

Theological Consultations

Theological consultations represent settings where Orthodox theologians convene and discuss doctrinal, moral, and liturgical issues as related to peace and violence. During 2009 and 2010 IPSEC has partnered with the World Council of Churches (Geneva,

Switzerland) and the Institute for Theology and Peace (Hamburg, Germany), and together they organized two international consultations on Orthodox peace ethics. The first consultation was held in Bucharest, Romania, from June 29 through July 3, 2009, and the second consultation was held in Damascus, Syria, from 18 through 22 October 2010. IPSEC also organized a consultative theological workshop in the context of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation sponsored by the World Council of Churches in Kingston, Jamaica, from 17 through 25 May 2011.

Bucharest 2009 (Peace Ethics): The first pan-Orthodox international expert consultation took place at the Patriarchal Palace of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Bucharest, Romania, from June 29 through July 3, 2010. The theme of the consultation was "Orthodox Peace Ethics in Eastern and Oriental Christianity," and the discussions focused on various issues including the blessing of the weapons in times of warfare, the role of canonical tradition in political conflict, the relationship between Church and State, Nationalism, globalization, psychology of victimization, cultural perceptions of Good and Evil, role of chaplaincy, and more.

*Damascus 2010 (Just Peace)***:** The second pan-Orthodox international expert consultation was hosted by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and it took place in Saidnaya-Damascus, Syria, from 18 through 22 October 2010, on the theme of "Just Peace." The Orthodox Christian understanding of peace-oriented justice is rooted in a long ethical and canonical tradition anchored into two definitions offered by the Roman jurists Celsus and Ulpianus, which had been adopted by the Byzantine State as guiding principles for social justice. While Celsus (+129AD) defined justice as "the art of good and equity," (jus est ars boni et aequi), Ulpianus (170-228AD) emphasized its distributive aspects, saying that, "justice is the constant and perpetual desire to give everyone his due." (Justitia est constans et perpetua voluntas, jus suum cuique tribuendi).

Kingston 2011 (Peace Education): IPSEC presented a consultative theological workshop titled, "Developing Strategic Education on Peacemaking: An Orthodox Christian Contribution," during the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC), which was held by the World Council of Churches in Kingston, Jamaica, from

17 through 25 May 2011. Contributing to the goals of IEPC, the workshop was part of the "peace in community" component of the Convocation, and it addressed Orthodox theological perspectives on international relations theory, diplomacy, identity, ecumenical and interfaith relations, and theological education.

Policymaking

IPSEC provides policy consulting services pertaining to the power of religion in the public life. Its expert services are provided directly and/or in partnership with affiliated institutions and individuals, for the benefit of businesses, governments, and religious entities. Specifically, IPSEC expert services focus on the role of religion in collective violence, cultural communication, politics, terrorism, collective identity, migration, diplomacy, bioethics, business development, and more. IPSEC consulting services are delivered via formal training programs, direct coaching and facilitation; by providing customized policy analysis reports, by offering policy advice on specific issues, by conducting and providing specific research, and by serving as "good offices" in contexts of conflict.

4) IPSEC Education

IPSEC offers an ample educational program accessible to anyone interested in learning more about the Orthodox Christian heritage of peace and violence. The educational program includes lectures, summer institutes, workshops, on-line courses, field education, certificate program, mass-media conversations, conferences, and more.

Courses

Part of its educational program, IPSEC offers several courses which explore and advance the general study of religion and collective violence, while also exploring the subjects of peace and violence

through the lenses of Orthodox Christian theology, ecclesiology, history, and culture. IPSEC courses can be taken for audit or for credit. If you are interested in taking a course, please note the available options.

An *Option 1* course is designed for personal development and it is offered as an introductory course for the general audience. The course package includes access to a limited amount of educational materials, recorded lectures, and tests for self-evaluation. Please note that courses in the Option 1 format receive no faculty support, no academic credit, and cannot be counted toward the requirements for a Certificate of Studies, since the awarding of a Certificate demands faculty supervision and evaluation.

The *Option 2* course is designed for university level (undergraduate and graduate) and it can be taken for personal development or academic credit. The package includes academic syllabus, access to the complete educational material, recorded lectures, advanced tests for self-evaluation, faculty support, and grading. Upon completion, IPSEC will issue an academic transcript upon request only. Please note that IPSEC is not accredited as a college. Therefore, if you wish to transfer IPSEC credits to your college or university, it will be up to your institution to accept credits.

Option 3 is similar to Option 2 in terms of contents, faculty support, and evaluation. The only difference consists in the variability of the fees assigned per credit hour, as well as in special enrollment requirements set by the university granting academic credit. If you are interested in pursuing this option, please contact us for details.

Method of Instruction

Option 1 offers access to a limited amount of educational materials, recorded lectures, and tests for self-evaluation, but no faculty support, evaluation and grading. The method of instruction for Option 2 and Option 3 includes lectures, readings assignments, group discussions, individual research assignments, a mid-term and a final exam. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the courses, each

class will be structured in such a way as to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the readings and stimulate creative thinking and conversations across the disciplines. Each class session will include lecture, a power-point presentation, a threaded discussion which will focus on the assigned readings, and email and video access to the instructor. Class participation will be evaluated and graded by assigned deadlines. Examination will also include a midterm and a final paper.

Current Offerings

Currently, IPSEC offers two online courses "Religion and Collective Violence" (a government course taught at Harvard University), and "War and Peacemaking in Orthodox Christianity" (a theology course taught at Boston College.)

Religion and Collective Violence

Centered on the idea of improving communication between religious leaders and policymakers when dealing with situations of collective violence, this course aims to offer a theoretical framework and a practical understanding of this phenomenon from the perspective of religious studies and political science. The course is innovative and cross-disciplinary in the sense that while covering the basic theoretical approaches to religion and political science, it correlates and integrates them via three major theories of violence derived from Evolutionary Psychology: frustration-aggression, alienation-deprivation, and learned behavior. Therefore, the students will first identify and understand the basic trajectories that religious leaders and policymakers follow when attempting to manage situations of collective violence. Students will then develop an understanding of an integrative method designed to improve cross-communication between policymakers and religious leaders, and to improve the coordination of the existing conflict management strategies between the two sources of authority. Students gain insight on how religious leaders and policymakers think and make decisions, and how best practices could be developed and implemented. (0 credits for Option 1; 3 credits for Option 2 and Option 3)

War and Peacemaking in Orthodox Christianity

The purpose of this course is to study the concepts of war and peace in Eastern Christianity. Despite its compelling record on pacifism, the Eastern Church had occasionally derailed from this position due to heretical attitudes in defining and identifying 'the enemy,' as well as due to pressures from political authorities. In the first part of this course, a focused literature review of patristic writings, liturgical compositions, Canon Law and selected contemporary writings will be conducted for the purpose of identifying the core, structural position of the Eastern Church(es) on violence and peacemaking. In the second part of the course, phenomenological themes such as 'evil' and 'dualism' will be analyzed for the purpose of comprehending heretical attitudes that emerged during times of war (e.g. demonizing of enemies), while political themes such as Just War and Nationalism will be explored for the purpose of identifying instances when members of the Church sanctioned defensive violence and fostered a version of nationalism that contradicted Christian universalism. The third part of this course will explore peacemaking methods developed throughout Eastern Christianity in light of the tripartite dimension of violence (against oneself, against God and against another human being), when managing human passions towards "fighting the good fight." (0 credits for Option 1; 3 credits for Option 2 and Option 3)

Field Education at Harvard Divinity School

The Institute for Peace Studies in Eastern Christianity (IPSEC) is affiliated with Harvard Divinity School (HDS) as an agency site for its Field Education Program. IPSEC is an intellectual setting which provides the students enrolled in the programs of Master of Divinity (MDiv) and Master of Theological Studies (MTS) with guided learning experiences that integrate theory and practice. The students direct their own learning, using their imagination and creativity to find the appropriate settings for their educational and vocational goals.

Opportunities: IPSEC is an Orthodox Christian agency site seeking to work with students interested in making a positive

contribution to the world peace, by focusing on the role of religion in international relations and policymaking. By exploring resources from Eastern and Oriental Christianity, IPSEC offers a dynamic learning environment where theory is combined with practice. By understanding the structural intricacies of various religious and political organizations in a pragmatic sense, and by dispatching the basic rules of protocol required when interacting with spiritual leaders and policymakers, IPSEC is an ideal site where the student will develop strong skills in religious diplomacy; skills that are useful beyond the tradition Orthodox Christianity. Pending on the student's interest, IPSEC will also facilitate access to, and interaction with spiritual leaders and policymakers in a hands-on fashion and on real life issues geared toward building the capacity for conflict transformation. IPSEC will also offer access to additional local and international venues for pragmatic learning about the role of religion in public and international policy.

Student InvolvemenT: IPSEC provides an opportunity for students in theological ministry to engage in up to 12 to 15 hours per week during the academic year (or 35 to 40 hours per week during the summer for approximately eight weeks), for a total of 350 to 400 hours per unit of supervised ministry experiences. Thus, one hour per week will consist of one-on-one theological supervision, travel time, on- or off-site preparation, participation in worship and various tasks.

IPSEC is seeking to work with one or two graduate theology students—from the perspective of each art of ministry—on the following issues and areas: a) inter-religious understanding and dialogue; b) religion and diplomacy; c) nationalism and pan-Orthodoxy in Russia and Eastern Europe; d) Orthodox Christianity in the Middle East, North Africa, and America; e) Orthodoxy and the ecumenical movement, and; f) issues of restorative justice and conflict transformation.

Arts of Ministry Competencies Offered:
* Administration and Program Development
* Denominational Polity
* Pastoral Care and Counseling

* Public Leadership, Community Organizing, and Planning
* Preaching and Worship
* Religious Education and Spiritual Development

Supervision: Theological supervision is conducted in-person and one-on-one, for at least one hour a week, in order to assist the student to successfully test and apply classroom knowledge to real life situations, and thus become a stronger reflective practitioner. We are also looking for students who will be involved directly with IPSEC, or, while participating in other designated sites, are willing to be involved in a gathering once a month to discuss the principles of religion, conflict, public and international policymaking and diplomacy, then applying them in a hands-on fashion in a specific project.

Certificate of Studies

Upon the successful completion of two courses taken for credit, IPSEC will issue a Certificate of Studies. This Certificate is not a degree, but a recognition of academic work performed in the general field of Peace Studies, with a focus on Orthodox Christianity. The academic credits obtained either from IPSEC or from one of IPSEC's partnering universities can be used toward a degree.

Summer Institute

The Institute for Peace Studies in Eastern Christianity (IPSEC) offers summer institutes independently or in partnership with various universities from the U.S. and abroad. The purpose of the summer institutes is to investigate how Orthodox Christianity manages its encounter with collective violence in a various geopolitical spheres which are situated at the intersection of former empires, political ideologies and organized religions.

For purpose of safety and logistics, IPSEC summer institutes are currently organized in Romania, in partnerships with local

universities. Logistically, it has long been recognized that Romania is a unique place of religious, political and diplomatic collision, where the Ottoman Muslims, the Russian Orthodox, and the Austro-Hungarian Catholic and Protestant leaders have learned how to negotiate their political differences and interests, territorial influence and control, and faith limitations.

Based on a study and travel model, the summer institute combines classroom training with onsite learning that involves visits to sacred places, and interviews with academics, religious leaders, political leaders and journalists.

IPSEC welcomes undergraduate and graduate students, as well as anyone interested in learning more about Orthodox Christianity and its challenges in Eastern Europe, Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia, and elsewhere.

Undergraduate and graduate academic credits may be available if a course is completed in the context of a summer institute.

Conclusions

As the distinction between the cruel and the compassionate behavior of the human being remains at the heart of human conscience, a "society of conscience" can indeed become sustainable only by tapping into the abundance of religious spirituality. In this case, IPSEC's institutional design, as outlined in this white paper, is an attempt to appraise the existing spiritual possessions of Orthodox Christianity, beyond the restrictions of ignorance.

Legislation, Ethics, and Religion: An Approach in the Context of Religious Freedom

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ABSTRACT: The analysis of the concepts present in the title has been made by taking into account the prevalence of some over the others and in strong inter-dependence between them, while the practical effect of the conclusions drawn is the relevant one.
KEY WORDS: morality, ethics, legislation, religion, interdependence

The presentation of the themes debated in the context of religious freedom constitutes, in my opinion, a subject for intellectual analysis and reflection, with a particular tone of pragmatic significance. The co-existence of a human being together with other human beings in a social, political, cultural, economic and religious environment involves rules and habits which shape the social, cultural, moral and religious behavior.

Considering a brief appeal to terminological interconnectedness between the concepts *legislation*,[1] *ethics*,[2] and *religion*,[3] my goal is to establish a symbiotic link of connection or determination, which will be analyzed both from a theoretical and philosophical perspective, as well as from their pragmatic role.

One rhetorical question still remains unavoidable. Is it possible for a person to know all the laws and the moral and religious norms so as to respect them and for these concepts to determine that

person to adopt adequate social and moral patterns of behavior for a civilized living?

What is it that makes us decent and socially integrated according to the moral norms? How can we have an adequate social and moral behavior? Does each citizen of a state know all the normative acts adopted by that state, so as to be able to respect them, given the Latin saying "nemo legem ignorare censetur" (nobody can be presumed not to know the law)? Realistically speaking, this expectation is at least utopic!

During his last speech at the Romanian Parliament, the President of Romania stated: "Romanians wish for clearer and simpler legislative norms, which do not change overnight. This reality must receive an answer. Currently fourteen thousand laws and ordinances are in force."[4] From a biological perspective, reading and remembering such a great amount of normative acts, so as to be observed and applied by the citizens, is an unrealistic expectation! In this context, we are asking ourselves how is it that citizens manage not to become criminals, while the state does not become an imaginary "large prison"? What is it that defends these citizens from such qualifications?

By observing the social environment and working in the field of the law enforcement, I can say with a high degree of certainty that both the education received in family and school, as well as the social-religious morality, constitute in fact the "compass" which indicates to citizens the path they have to follow in society, avoiding or respecting the legal norms adopted by that state. It is obvious that, in the absence of a moral-religious educational component which constitutes, in fact, the basic element of the social existence, the wish for legal norms would be only a form deprived of content, while the social, economic, legal and cultural consequences would be a disaster!

What do we want to prove with the observation above? We want to point out the prevalence of the moral and religious factor in determining the social behavior of the individuals composing a society.

In a study made regarding public functions,[5] with reference to the conduct of civil servants, we have reached an interesting

conclusion regarding the correlation established between the moral and legal norms, advancing the thesis of the moral and law symbiosis and of the mutual exchange of the role of means and purpose[6] pointing out that, many of the times, the legal norms represent a means, a vector for accomplishing a moral purpose, or the other way round, when the moral expressions and values are used by the lawmaker to provide a legal, compulsory, purpose, with a general coverage.

Thus, the existence itself of the deontological and ethical codes represents a confirmation of the thesis above, mentioning that only the deontological codes are adopted by the lawmaker, while the ethical ones are assumed by various organizational and civil forms belonging to certain categories of functions, jobs and professions. Even the definition of the public function deontology, for instance, represents a symbiosis of the legal and moral norms related to the public function, which creates an image of the professional and private behavior of a civil servant. It is like in the Chinese philosophy, where Yin cannot exist without Yang and the other way round.

The co-existence and the connection of the themes debated by this paper can continue only by using the same method of observing the moral, cultural and religious phenomena. Therefore, often it is the same complex system of social relations that is regulated by spiritual norms and values. For instance, theft, murder and other crimes incriminated by the laws of Moses from the Old Testament are also incriminated by the system of moral norms, but also of the legal ones.

Religion "sanctions" the thought and the word, making the distinction between various sins; some of which can be forgiven, while others cannot. The same acts are punished by the civil law and by the social moral rules. If the sin of theft can be forgiven by religion in certain conditions, as well by the law, such as in the case of *pardon* or *amnesty* in the criminal law, moral consciousness never forgets such deeds and the public repudiation of such acts persist for entire generations.

The European space of the geopolitical existence of our country is undoubtedly impregnated with the Jewish-Christian morality. Consequently, the Christian religion was a determinant

component for the morality and law. In fact, moral norms and ethical standards are based on the religious determination. Even the social pre-Christian behavior from this space (taking into account the Dacian period) were supported by religious statements, there being a merging between religion, law and morality. The entire feudal period of the Romanian states was determined by the prevalence of religion over the other two social components, so that it was only when the modern contemporary states emerged that a distinction was made between the components; nonetheless, there is even today an inter-dependence between them. Only a simultaneous and inter-disciplinary analysis of this co-existence can succeed and it has a practical use for the society. In our opinion, the constitutional laity of modern and democratic states separate only formally the components mentioned above, but the practical reality regarding the functioning of the states makes nothing but confirming the merging of the systems analyzed. A simple example proves this assertion. Thus, the oath sworn by the civil servants and officers on the occasion on their investment with the public function refers to the three components. We are speaking first of all of a legal text upholding the existence of the oath and the compulsory character of it being sworn. In the context of the oath, a clear reference is made to the respect for constitution and law, while the exertion of these functions must be made in good faith, a component which is related to the ethics and morality! The guarantee for respecting the oath is given, in the end, by the reference to the Divinity as an additional argument to strengthen the legal statement of the expression! This situation occurs in front of the court, when the oath sworn by the witness is strengthened and guaranteed too by the appeal to the Divinity.

On the other hand, it can be noticed that we have earned a lot in the freedom field but, at the same time, we have also lost a lot in the moral field. Which is the loss and what generated this predicament? On the one hand it was natural for the social expectations of human beings, denied for so many decades, to reach peaks so high and impossible to reach from a human perspective by the state leadership structures. As a rule, any illusion is followed by a potential disillusion! Besides the generic aspects of the concepts erosion, the

fears of the prominent economist Anghel Rugină[7] came true at the beginning of the 1990s, when he sadly stated that, "instead of taking the best from the communism and build the best of capitalism over it, we have taken over the worst of the communism and built the worst of capitalism over it."[8] The result of this poisonous "symbiosis" was the erosion of the freedom concept and the destruction of the moral being of the Romanian people.

Unfortunately, the communist period in which the human freedom was denied led to the uncontrolled manifestation of it, so that most of the people understood that they could do whatever they wished without having to account to anyone or care about the freedom of the others. In this social frenzy, strong characters, deprived of morality or social principles, took over the political, economic and social mechanisms, impregnating this kind of abnormal behavior at a decisional level. We have reached the point where, in 2016 several concepts constructing and defining the human being (goodness, good will, modesty, altruism, common sense, sensibility and so on) became genuine handicaps when it came to social integration, as they are considered true weaknesses of the human being and even mocked at. This reversal of human values took place quite fast, during the historic time, so that cheap tastes, rudeness, recklessness, selfishness, guts, the lack of respect and education have become the "genuine" values of the parvenus, who managed to climb higher and higher the Romanian social leather.

The eternal elements which have supported the existence of the Romanian people are starting to be placed aside, in the shadow and forgiveness, by being replaced with "tumor" which contaminates the social body.

We are speaking here about traditions which have started to be forgotten, like popular crafting, old workmanship, authentic culture and so on, by being replaced with contemporary creations (for instance cheap easy music), imported products, broadcasted subculture and tabloids.

The structural bases of the religions are under attack, as denigration is promoted against church leaders and the reference elements of the Christian religion are questioned, by invoking all sorts of scientific discoveries which presumably deny the divine

character of the Saint Trinity for instance, according to the principle: "Beat up the shepherd and destroy his herd."[9]

It can be currently noticed that the personal freedom has been taken so far that the abortion is now considered legal and moral. Is it however accepted by the religion? As far as we know, all recognized religions and cults condemn this method, and yet law, despite the morality above, still allows for the abortion, ignoring the religious opposition. It is an obvious contradiction between high structural concepts. The misinterpretation of freedom has led to this dangerous process as we see it, which continues to expand. The freedom of movement, determined by the lack of efficiency of the national offer, has led to the break of certain secular connections within the family, so that the word "together"—which should characterize a family—has become something else! The family—"the basic cell of the society," as it was considered during communism—has become the most vulnerable in front of the external attacks of all types. The moral promiscuity, the media, economic problems, poor education and behavioral decadence, as an expression of a misinterpreted freedom, have irreversibly destroyed the Romanian family. The relationships outside marriage, the divorce and the consensual unions have started to become a substitute for the classical family recognized by the Christian religion and morality, being more and more approved by the law and morality. This is the second strong breach in the main chain, between its elements.

Is this the consequence of the freedom earned with such difficulty? Giving up to some sovereign prerogatives of the Romanian State, to the benefit of supranational institutions, has led to the implementation in the Romanian legislation of several regulations which are alien to the Romanian spirit, like sexual freedom, so that certain restrictive regulations belonging to the communist criminal law have been rehabilitated towards new concepts and modalities. If at the legislative level there is an obvious open-mindedness, at the moral level there are still certain reactions becoming weaker and weaker as time goes by. Consequently, this time too, religion becomes the last defense wall attempting to support certain moral-Christian concepts. And this is how it can be noticed another breach in determining the supranational elements in the Romanian society.

As a result, it can be seen that the globalization to which we have referred brings foreign ideas and concepts in the Romanian society, which are becoming more and more predominant and which will de-personalize our national human being. We refuse to accept his type of globalization as it dissolves the national shade which characterizes us in the multinational picture.

The European integration has been understood as "Unity in diversity" and by no means as a melting of our national identity, for long supported by religion, morality and legislation. It can be noticed how all the national defense walls collapse step by step in front of the globalization storm and European federalization more and more desired.

The first "defense wall" which is under attack is the national legislation, which must be adapted to the European constitutive treaties. This leads to a gradual loss of all features of the national sovereignty, under the helpless eyes of the citizen. The second "defense wall," is the national moral standards; a cultural feature which is deeply altered by the current crisis of values.

The reversal of moral values referred to above, the excessive tolerance towards the "imports" of foreign values (i.e., Valentine's Day, Halloween), led to the irreversible alteration of the national being, melting national values in the pot of the international "values".

Religion, the last defense wall, is starting to be fiercely attacked! Gospels not approved by the Church are being discovered, traditions dating back several centuries are being questioned and church leaders are being placed under doubt, so that, little by little and in a certain way, the idea of the world ecumenism and church is starting to gain more and more dominance.

In the Islamic fundamentalist states under the religious influence of the Koran, the moral and legal concepts are being mistaken with the religious ones, so that the overlap of these types of norms is the basic rule for the functioning of the society.

We consider that in the present, in the context of the massive migration experienced by Europe, the theme in question is very applicable[10]. The European population is divided between two completely different opinions: one towards accepting the

phenomenon and the other towards rejecting it; the pros and cons are related to religion, morality or legislation. Forcing an opinion over the other does nothing but radicalizing the peoples that are opposed to the phenomenon, leading to stronger nationalist and radical movements in the countries affected. Not understanding the phenomenon, not analyzing its cause, but also imposing by force a directive over the will of the peoples is, in our opinion, the worst decision which the European officials can make! The analysis of the legal, religious and ethical aspects must be completed with the geopolitical and economic aspects, whereas the practical answer to this issue can only be offered by a dialogue between the persons called to guide the destiny of the peoples. It is the reason for which we consider that the current debate of the ethical, legal and religious phenomena, in the context of the religious freedom, must go over the sphere of the theoretical analysis, into the practical daily reality, while the Olympic and academic debate of the interaction between the analyzed components must also offer practical solutions, which can afterwards be made available to the political officials. The melting pot of ideas and debates must also include a practical component, because the reality that we live in imposes solid and immediate solutions.

NOTES

[1] Legislation, *legislations,* noun. all the laws of a country or of a legal domain—from French législation, Lat. legislatio.

[2] Ethics, noun 1. The theoretical study of the basic principles and conceptions from any field and of the practical thought and activity 2. The complex of norms in relation to which a human group regulates its own behaviour, in order to make a distinction between what it is legitimate and acceptable for accomplishing goals; morality—from French éthique, Lat. ethicus.

[3] Religion, *religions,* noun 1. Ideas, feelings and actions shared by a group, which provide to its members a worship object, a behavioral code, and a reference frame for entering in a relation with the group and the universe; confession; faith. Fig. Creed, cult. 2. Subject taught in school, aiming to educate and instruct pupils in the spirit of the given religion– From French religion, Lat. religio, -onis, Germ. religion.

⁴ Cf. http://www.amosnews.ro/klaus-iohannis-discurs-parlament-2015-09-16 (Last accessed on April 15, 2016.)

⁵ Ivanoff Ivan Vasile, *Deontologia funcției publice*, 4ᵗʰ ed., revised and updated, (Târgoviște: Editura Bibliotheca, 2013.)

⁶ Ibid., 53.

⁷ Anghel Rugină (born on May 24, 1913 in Vizurești village, Galați district—deceased on 15ᵗʰ December 15, 2008 in the USA) was an American economist of Romanian origins, elected as honorary member of the Romanian Academy (in 1990). Cf. http://www.wikipedia.org (Last accessed on April 15, 2016.)

⁸ Statement made by Anghel Rugină in the Florentine Hall of the town hall of Târgoviște în the 1990s, on the occasion of a visit made in the city.

⁹ Mathew 14.31

¹⁰ Cf. Samuel Phillips Hungtington, *Ciocnirea civilizațiilor și refacerea ordinii mondiale,* (București: Editura Antet, 2007.)

The twenty-first century ushered mankind into adventurous, exciting, but challenging new horizons. The new power of computation led to colossal advances in genetics, space exploration, and quantum physics—just to name a few—while the power of human imagination reached new summits. At the same time, mankind faces threats posed by increased competition over resources, military rivalries, economic imbalance, environmental deple- tion, demographic growth, terrorism, wars and migration. Therefore, the goal of this series of conferences is to reunite promising and well established scholars in a creative environment, to propose holistic ways of thinking by nurturing the engagement of the global intellectual elite into conversations meant to tackle the new challenges faced by the mankind. It is a conversa- tion which attempts to go beyond the existing paradigms of thinking.