International Journal of Theology, Philosophy and Science

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Preface

The second issue of *International Journal of Theology, Philosophy and Science* (May 2018) presents a cluster of articles on various aspects, all of them centred on the area of Philosophy, Theology, and Science.

Thus, first paper: *Man as religious, rational, free and conscious being* by Marin BUGIULESCU undertakes a theological and philosophical analysis about human nature. Man has always been seen as a religious, rational, free and conscious being. The world and man appeared out of nothing; the latter bears the image of God and is destined for holiness. For that matter, no other being in the universe is – or will ever be – of greater importance than man. The next work is *Consciousness and the End of Materialism: Seeking identity and harmony in a dark era* and it belongs to Spyridon I. KAKOS. The author tries to discard current underlying dogmatism of modern mind research and to show that consciousness seems to be the ultimate frontier that will cause a major change in the way the exact sciences conceive. Mind seems that is not the by-product of matter, but the opposite: its master.

After that, the paper entitled: *Contemporary bioethical perspectives regarding the family*, written by Florea ȘTEFAN and Marian PUIESCU presents the problem of the family from the contemporary bioethical perspectives. Family represents both a value and an institution that is necessary to our world which cannot be replaced by anything else. Unfortunately, the contemporary social context is one that minimizes religious values. The next study, by Cristian GAGU, points to an as old as new important issue: *A New Pretext to Attack Church – Alleged Discrimination of Women*. There are often accusations of alleged discrimination of the Orthodox Church made by various media associations promoting feminist movement, which are dismantled through a rigorous linguistic argument. The paper of Nicuşor BELDIMAN: *National unity and unity of Faith in the Speeches of Patriarch Miron Cristea*, bears the stamp of the first Patriarch of Romania, who is forever inscribed in the Golden Book containing the names of the great Romanian people who were part of the Great Union of 1st December 1918, at Alba Iulia.

Alexandru-Corneliu ARION signs the subsequent article: *Outlines of comparative view of Hindu and Christian Mysticism*. The model of Hindu ontological identity between God and man, Christianity opposes the model of personal transfiguration, through the continuous elongation of the person in God, realization possible only from the perspective of divine uncreated energies. The following academic pursue is that of Spiros MAKRIS, entitled: *Emmanuel Levinas on hospitality: Ethical and Political aspects*, that tries to indicate the critical fact, according to Levinas's ethical argumentation, that a public policy on refugee question should mainly be determined by the ethics of hospitality in the sense of the pure welcoming of the absolute Other.

Taking Responsibility and the Manipulation Problem is another issue presented by Roberto Parra DORANTES. The paper raises an objection against the analysis of the notion of 'taking responsibility' offered by John M. Fischer and Mark Ravizza while developing their complex and attractive theory of moral responsibility. Zheng WANG's contribution: *Bruno's Organic universe and the natural magic* sets forth from G. Bruno's doctrine, whence his predilection for the magic is derived, which is based precisely on the presupposition of a universal "panpsychism". The volume of our journal ends with Francesco MALAGUTI: *Giordano Bruno and the Islamic Tradition*, who exhibited an interest in the scientific and philosophical theories of Islam.

May 2018   **PhD. Alexandru Corneliu ARION**

MAN AS RELIGIOUS, RATIONAL, FREE AND CONSCIOUS BEING

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ABSTRACT
This study presents the philosophical and humanistic outlook and the Christian thinking about human nature and in this perspective the man is a rational, conscious and free being, he is in permanent dialogue with God, the Creator of the world. At the heart of rational thinking has always been the man seen as a religious, rational, free and conscious being. As a clarification of evolutionary thinking, Christianity speaks of evolution within the species, and not from one species to another. God is a pretended, impersonal existence, or a principle of the world for philosophy and scientific theories, and even for other religions. Unlike these, the Christianity, as revealed religion, originates from the reality that God exists and because He has truly been revealed to man in the context of time and creation. The key concepts specific to the Christian religion are: God the Holy Trinity, the creator of the world and man appeared from nothing (ex nihilo), man bears the icon of God and is destined for holiness. Based on these realities, no other being in the universe, known or unknown, was, is or will ever be of a greater importance than man, because there is no other being created with the icon of God, for the fulfillment of which God assumed the human nature, saving and sanctifying it through Christ.
Keywords: man as rational being; conscious; free; philosophy; theology; Christianity;

INTRODUCTION

Man is (*ab initio)* from the very beginning a religious being, although some opinions or scientific ideas emphasize the opposite, claiming that the religious phenomenon has appeared in the evolution of thinking and living. As a fundamental and rational discipline, philosophy in the understanding of the theory of existence (ontology) formulated over time responses to the religious phenomenon, accepted by virtue of logic as forms or current thoughts specific to man as a conscious-cognitive being.

From an etymological point of view, the word religion comes from Latin and has different meanings. For example, Cicero deduces it from *relegĕre* (to recite, to meditate, to reflect), whereas Virgiliu from *relinquĕre* (to remain, to distinguish, to put aside). Lactantius and most philologists and theologians infer the word religion from *religāre* (linking again or mutually uniting). In fact, religion is the free and conscious connection of man with God, and includes the relation to divinity through knowing Him, but also knowledge of the realities of life. In all historical times, belief in divinity has guided mankind, and religion has played an essential role in human life from the moment of coming into the world and continuing to death. Religious life is present in all peoples of the world, no matter of the degree of institutional and social development and organization. The existence of religion is

dependent on the question of man's existence and the knowledge of divinity within the monetary peoples or divinities in the case of the polytheistic ones. Mircea Eliade argues that

> "Religion begins where there is total revelation of reality: revelation at the same time of the sacred - of what is excellence, of what is neither illusory nor evanescent - and of man's relationship with the sacred (...) that places the man right in the heart of the real"[1].

The origin of religion has been analyzed and conceptualized over time in three theories: evolutionary (developed with man), rationalist (based on human reason that invented religion) and nativist (religious ideas are born in the mind of man). At the heart of rational thinking has always been the man seen as a religious, rational, free and conscious being. As a clarification of evolutionary thinking, Christianity speaks of evolution within the species, and not from one species to another. According to the Darwinist evolution, man is traced from a form of anthropoid, vanished, but still has representative evolutions in current anthropoids, such as the gibbon. There are also naturalists who contradict this idea by supporting evolution in different species. Others talk about parallel developments, from which people appeared in different places and periods. Of course, all these suppositions cannot be called theories because there is no evidence of any kind, but only speculation, given by some institutions and scholars, biologists and anthropologists as value of truth, deliberately ignoring the historical reality of man as a religious being who has always had the idea of a creative divinity.

1. RATIONAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS ON HUMAN NATURE

Analyzed from materialistic-dialectical thought perspective, man is a continuous challenge investigated according to the scientific field and defines unanimously as the maximum result of evolution. As a paradoxical personal religious being, man is the bearer of the divine icon, by virtue of which his status and role in creation is that of a conciliatory ring between transcendent and immanent. From this perspective, man is not only an object of science of God, but also a creative subject and a bearer of science, because ontologically, by reason, his conscience and his freedom are oriented towards knowledge, discovery and rediscovery, and more chosen to his Creator-God. This orientation acquires a real content supported by the logical knowledge of the cosmos and the prophetic being, but especially by the revealed faith that does not ignore the logical knowledge that it deepens through the mystical or spiritual knowledge.

The methods and means of dialectical knowledge are multiple, but if the result remains circumscribed in their sphere, then man is not regarded as a whole (material and spiritual), but as a conceptually defined part physically, anatomically, psychologically, sociologically etc. An essential contribution to this is, especially lately, scientific technology and micro-robotization, genetic manipulation, and many other tools for doing all sorts of experiments. But there is a dilemma in this, a pertinent question: Does man use the technique? Or does the technique use man? All these autonomies and totalizing technologies of science that claim to go up to the created and uncreated tooth border are necessary, to the "God's particle", of course a "god" created and divided into several, depending on the stage of the research.

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[1] Mircea Eliade, *Mituri, vise şi mistere* (Mythes, rêves et mystères), trad. Maria Ivănescu and Cezar Ivănescu, Bucureşti, Univers Enciclopedic Gold, 2010, p. 12

From a rational-philosophical point of view we can speak of a series of features that are specific to human nature, on which the material, cultural and psychological evolution of man was based. As a rational and conscious being, man has always asked questions about both the outer world (the surrounding world) and the inner one (the world conceived in the soul or the personal self). This openness to the world and to the human being has been analyzed since the Antiquity, being a fundamental issue both for the religious and philosophical world, and more recently for various scientific researches.

By virtue of rational power, philosophy has highlighted the superiority of human nature. Man has the quality of being rational. The origin of conceptualization[2], as claimed by Plato and Aristotle, is given by man's ability to look at the world and be amazed, which makes him wonder: What are they all about? This state of astonishment and wonder in front of the world did not appear in the historical time but native is in the deepest structures of man (amazement, the desire to know only for the sake of knowing, doubt the conscience of the precariousness of the human being) that have remained the same along the axis of time, giving it its self-identity. Plato speaks, in the Republic[3], about the three parts of the human soul: the rational, the active and the prudent. The rational part is the one that distinguishes the man from the animal and is qualified as the highest part of the soul, having a divine source and being immortal. The active part works ideally with the rational one, and one of its own. The appealing part refers to natural impulses, to bodily desires, and is, in the hierarchy of soul, on the lowest level, it brings man closer to instincts of animals. „*Body, soul, mind: to the body belongs the sensations, the soul - the impulses, the minds - the teachings*"[4]

These intrinsic capacities of man, and inherent to the soul, made him a wisdom-wise and creator of wisdom, philosopher.

> "Pythagoras ...saying that no man is wise, but only the god. Philosophy was formerly called wisdom, and the professor was called wise, to show that he had reached the highest degree of soul perfection; the philosopher was the lover of wisdom"[5].

What characterizes human nature is, first of all, wisdom as an intellectual, moral and spiritual reality, as the union between the sides of the soul, held in a balance as stable as defined by virtue. Heraclitus of Ephesus (540-470 BC), expresses all these: „*wisdom is one thing: to have the ability to know all things through the intercession of all things; wisdom means .... to conform to the truth by obedience to the nature (physics) of things*"[6]. The entire contemplative, rational and logical process was expressed by the theoretical extent. Conceptual theory in antiquity has been formulated on the basis of the Greek verb theoréo (θεωρέω) which I consider that involves the following operations: to look, contemplate, examine or consider, but also derived meanings: theoréion, which aimed at the place where the audience contemplates the representation of the actors ; theoréma, which was a spectacle, but also an object of scientific observation; theoretical, visible (in itself but also with the mind's eye), that is, what is comprehensible, which can be understood immediately and instantaneously; theoretical, contemplative, intellectual.

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[2] Karl Jaspers, *Texte filosofice*, (*Philosophical texts*), Bucureşti, Politică, 1986, p. 5

[3] Platon, *Republica*, cartea a-VIII-a, 543a – 592b, Enciclopedică, Bucureşti, 1986, p. 347

[4] Marcus Aurelius, *Gânduri către sine însuşi*, (*Meditations*), Cartea III, 16, Traducere, prefaţă şi note de Cristian Bejan, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2013, p.113

[5] Diogene Laertios, *Despre vieţile şi doctrinele filosofilor (On philosophers' lives and doctrines)*, Bucureşti, Editura Academiei, p.118.

[6] Ion Banu, *Filosofia greacă până la Platon (*,Greek philosophy to Plato) Vol. I. Partea a 2-a, Bucureşti, Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, p. 321-373

In the paradigm of intellectual thinking, formulated on the scale of historical evolutions, man is the source of ideas that, in the horizon of a potential existence, postulate new realities that do not preexist before his own activities of knowledge, except in the form of preconditions, of simple virtualities.

> "Where there is an object, there is thought. Is it then the thought of something and the object another thing? No, what is the subject exactly is the thought. If the object was one thing and the thought was different, then there would be a dual state of mind. So the object itself is just thought. Can the thought then analyze the thought? No, thought cannot analyze the thought. As the edge of the sword cannot cut itself and the tip of a finger cannot touch itself, so a thought cannot conceive of itself"[7].

This approach was summed up by Descartes in the Cartesian formula: "*I think therefore exist.*" Ancient thinking placed man in the context of a seen world, conceived as a cosmos, respectively, as an order with its own rationality, opposed to chaos. The first to use the word cosmos to characterize the universe, was Pythagoras. Heraclitus conceives cosmic order through logos, understood as the Natural Law. But the world, the cosmos has an arché, (beginning, principle) that expands through unity and diversity, through harmony. Starting from the context of creation, the principle of the world (arché) for Thales of Miletus is water. The Miletus School through Anaximenes and Anaximandros identified the world's nature in other elements: air and apeiron (infinite, unconditional, endless), respectively. Then Pythagoras School (580-500 BC) conceives the monad that underlies everything that exists. The logos of Heraclitus in Ephesus are identified by fire (*pyr*), understood as the everlasting entity responsible for all that is happening in the world, from which all things come, and all of it returns.

With Parmenides (515-450 BC), thinking is placed as a principle of being, for it is meant to think. This means that the definition of being is made on the basis of the formal conditions of thought. The logical structures of thought create the outer and inner universe, and logically constrained we must conclude that the being exists. Plato's dialogical thinking[8] (428-347 BC) starts from the inner forces of man who has access to the truth. Truth pre-exists in the mind of man in a latent, undefined form, and through dialogue reveals it in theories. Knowing this means knowing something I knew before. The pre-existence of truth has generated the hierarchy of the world or the Theory of Ideas exposed in the dialogue of the Republic, the 7th book. Conceptually Plato talks about three ideas: 1. the visible world, 2. the intelligible world, 3. the idea of participation that reflects the relationship between the One and the Multiple. Starting from the distinction between phenomenon-appearance and essence, Plato conceives the world of ideas as a transcendent, eternal and invisible world different and separate from sensitive things. Knowledge of ideas is the pre-existent appanage of man who through the soul (*nous*, intelligence, thinking) before being united with the body has access to the reality of the universe, of the Idea and thus makes the transition from general to universal.

Aristotle (383-322 BC) through critical reporting to other philosophers, including Plato, instills a new way of thinking, namely metaphysics. From the etymology of the metaphysical word: meta (after) and physike (nature, essence) by the nature of things, by essence, we understand that we are talking about knowing things in ourselves. Man has the need for knowledge in the structure of soul life. The Arché explains both the unity of the

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[7] Alain W. Watts, *Calea Zen*, (*The Zen Way*), Humanitas, 1997, p. 77
[8] Expressed in 28 dialogues and 13 letters (of which only 3 are authenticated).

world and diversity, it is in all its essence that makes the world an order and a unity. "The common feature of all these principles is that they are the first starting point for which one thing is, is born or is known" (Metaphysic V, 1; 1013a). Starting from these particular realities, man knows and is known. The problem gets shades in relation to purpose. In Politics, Aristotle shows that the purpose of man is to lead a happy life. Man is an eminently social being, because it is in his nature to live in the family or to associate with others to live happier. The purpose and purpose of man is therefore the fulfillment of his nature. The world is composed of infinite things, phenomena and relationships, but each retains its own individuality. The world is made up of individual things and therefore there are not two identical things, but all these particularities are in harmony. In Aristotle's view, the quest for happiness (through reason) and man's predisposition to happiness understood as supreme is the native capabilities that man has.

The relationship between the One and the Multiple, sustains the harmony and symbiosis between man and created ones, on the one hand, and divine man on the other. The idea of harmony stems from the concept of Pythagoras, developed by A. Koestler, through which the universe is considered a lira or a city whose emperor is man. This compatibility between man and nature, this connection between the individual being and the universe, results from the fact that the world was created for man, an idea promoted by the Stoics, and emphasized by Mark Aurelius who says:

> "Anything that fits me, world, suits you, nothing happens to me too soon or too late for you to happen at the right time. Forminus is a fruit whatever your season produces, a nature: everything comes from you, there is everything in you, in you everything turns"[9].

With the economic, scientific and technical development of the world, following the idea promoted by Thales of Miletus, the man of European philosophy, seeks his origin in explaining the phenomena of nature, in the action of a natural factor and not in the action of a divinity (determinism, evolutionism, creationism).

In Renaissance there is a turning point, appealing to the ancient classic spirit, where man occupies the central place. Nature is presented as the perfect temple of God the Architect, - Pico de Mirandola (1463-1494), man is free, can be created by himself; his supreme mission is the discovery of the divine dwelling in him. After about two hundred years in the era of Enlightenment Blaise Pascal (1623 - 1662) considers that man is a rational animal, equipped with the power to rationalize, think, but is a weak being: "*Man is but a reed, the weakest of nature; but it is a cute reed*". René Descartes, the founder of classical rationalism, defines man as a dual, physical and material being as (a stretched substance and a thinker substance), from the point of view of the essence which is the thought expressed by the formula "*I think, therefore exist*."

With the passage of time in the spirit of modern thinking, the description of the human nature in terms of knowledge focused only on the powers of man's mind because of the autonomy of science and technology that pretend to explain everything that exists. If ancient thinking spoke of a human nature full of transcendental abilities, the knowledge of the transcendent infinity, modern thinking puts in the center the instinct-dominated instinctual man who gives a permanent struggle for survival. The only generally valid explanation is given by technique, empirical research, science. If the thinking of the ancient philosophers also implied some religious experience with rationalism and modern

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[9] Marcus Aurelius, *Gânduri către sine însuşi*, (*Meditations*), Cartea IV, 23, Traducere, prefaţă şi note de Cristian Bejan, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2013, p. 127

empiricism, religion is excluded from the systems of knowledge of man and the world, although in the recent period certain steps have been taken to establish a dialogue between science and faith. By replacing God with the scientist, Renaissance has contributed to intellectual desacralization and dehumanization of man.

Thomas Hobbes, the fundamental work Leviathan where he formulates the concept of war against everyone (*bellum omnium contra omnes*), gave the tone of autonomy to the human nature that identifies itself in the context of creation through the instinct of self-preservation. Man is an asocial being, who lives on the basis of a contract and has a natural attachment to autonomy. People are before the state, the society. In the natural state of nature, the instinct of self-consciousness generates selfishness and violence against others. John Locke (1632-1704), in Human Understanding Essay[10] excludes natural ideas present in the mind or in human consciousness. He claims that the human mind is, at birth, like an empty board (tabula rasa) on which information begins to be written through experience. His predecessor Fr. Bacon (1561-1626) based on the inductive method bases any scientific knowledge on the observation data by supporting empiricism or the argument of actual experimental facts.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in a pessimistic spirit, starting from the idea that society is the one who perverts nature speaks of "the wild thing" a concept presented in book *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*. Man also has defining sentiments, for example mercy, but by survival he has mastered animal instincts.

> "The savage lives for himself; the sociable man who is always outside knows not only to live according to the opinion of others and draws the feeling of his own existence only out of their judgment ... /. This is not the natural state of man, but the spirit of society and the inequality that it inspires are those that change and alter our natural inclinations".[11]

It is society that perverts human nature. David Hume (1711-1776) in his work, entitled Research on the Human Intellectuality, argues that „*man is a rational being, but the limits of the powers of the human intellect are so narrow that we cannot hope too much about both the extent and the certainty of his conquests. Man is a sociable being to the same extent as it is rational.*"[12]

The desacralization of medieval life on the religious, political and cultural realms has emerged in a universal economy, in a universal science (scholastics), in a jurisprudence and a universal social order, hierarchically divided, dividing values into an individualistic diversity. Renaissance puts the biological man and his beauty at the forefront. At this time, literature and philosophy focus on "*homo liberalis*", the truly liberal man defined by Rabelais and expressed in the formula "*do all you want*".

Absolutely all human research believes that it has a number of cognitive structures that allow and encourage learning through experience, starting with language and going up to the most advanced notions. The system of thinking, the articulated language, the ability of the sentient feelings, distinguishing the man from the rest of the animals and placing him in a higher position, these are necessary conditions, but not sufficient for the fulfillment of the human being. In the book *The Human Place in the Cosmos*, Max Scheler states that "*being*

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[10] John Locke, *Eseu asupra intelectului omenesc*, (*Human Understanding Essay*), vol. I-II, Bucureşti, Ştiinţifică, 1961

[11] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*, Paris, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1964, p. 140

[12] David Hume, *Cercetare asupra intelectului omenesc*, (*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*), Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1987, p. 91

man is to say a powerless reality".[13] Also Martin Heidegger, after a period of relativization of the axiological notions, in the *Being and Time*, published in 1927, replicated the problem of ontology and phenomenology (human being), through the *Dasein* idea (in German "yes" means here and "Sein" is being). The Dasein conception, giving up all previous knowledge and ideas, wants to start from a zero point and claims that man is born as "tossed" into the world to death. Man has no choice in the first instance, he does not choose to be born. Throwing is essential to the human being. Dasein is defined by a threefold state: the design (the man as a possible), the throwing (the man as a beast who does not choose whether or not to be born) and the one of the fall (the fact-to-be-fell). This explains the loss of man by contamination with sensitive reality, speaking of transcendental preexistence, to overcome the concepts by which man is defined from the biological perspective as superior animal.

Without confusing them because they are different in this issue, we are hurting some essential Christian-specific ideas. The special and personal relationship that man has to have with God is very clear from the act of biblical creation, from the fact that all other creatures were made by the power of the word of God: "*And God said ...*" (Genesis 1,3,6,9), while man is created by a special act through the direct participation of God the Holy Trinity. The crucial transition from animal to human to Christianity is not a mechanical or evolutionary act, nor does it arise through a commandment but a direct and mediated action of God in which the breath of life of the Spirit creates the conscious and free being MAN. Thus, man is the individual and universe that embodies the power to participate in infinity, being a *microtheos*, but by falling into sin is conscious that it is not infinite itself, always living, with its indefinite, insufficiency, relativity, boundaries of its own nature but united with aspiration and thirst for absolute:

"…he is created by God, but he is not altogether devoid of participation in God and parted from Him. He is not thrown into a world, separated from God, as Heidegger said. It is objectively sustained in existence by the infinite God and cannot not subjectively tend towards the Absolute."[14]

With these ideas, we are going to the next chapter that will present the Christian conception of man understood as a rational, conscious and free being in dialogue with God the Creator.

2. MAN, RAISONAL, CONSCIOUS AND FREE DIALOGUE CONVIEW WITH GOD. THE WAY FROM NEFINITY TO BEING

The approach from this part of the work is the one given by divine revelation in the Bible. The key concepts are Christian ones that speak of the existence of a Holy Trinity God, the creator of the world and man of nothing (ex nihilo). The ex nihilo concept of making the world philosophically ontological is unacceptable. Rational and limited thinking cannot conceive of the existence of non-existence, and on the other hand doing nothing requires a term beyond itself, of material reality. Paradoxically, in the plane of metaphysical thought, being and non-existence are in identity and difference at the same time.

God is a pretended existence, impersonal or a principle of the world for philosophy and scientific theories, and even for other religions. Unlike these, Christianity as revealed religion originates from the reality that God exists and because it has truly been revealed to man in the context of time and creation.

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[13] Max Scheler, *Poziția omului în cosmos (The Human Place in the Cosmos)*, Paralela 45, București, 2001, p. 56

[14] Pr. Prof. D. Stăniloae, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, (*The Immortal Icons of God*), Mitropolia Olteniei, Craiova 1987, p. 37

In particular, creation and humanity in general, as revealed by divine biblical revelation explained by patristic theology, is the work of divine love brought from nothing to existence. A personal God, more precisely Tri-Personal, is without a beginning and an end, and reveals himself to his special creation, man. We do not speak of God as an unconscious, impersonal force flowing into and over the world, merging with it, as in pantheism, but by a transcendent and incapable of God's being, and immanent or cognizable after works. Only such an ontological, loving, eternal Being can create a being capable of relationship and love, in a continual knowledge and existence, namely, man. In Christian theology, God is "what is," (ό ών) because he has the quality of a Personal Being, and his existence does not depend on anything, not even on His Being or Nature, for His Being or Nature does not make His existence obligatory. His absolute will and liberty is accomplished as everlasting love and interpersonal communion, that is why he was blessed as follows: "God is love" (1 John 4:16). The divine meaning of Divine Existence is "BE LOVE": „ *what is constituted in his personal Existence, in the Trinity of Personal Hypostasis, which makes the Divine Being, Divine Nature or Divine Being, a life of love, that is, free of any necessity ...*"[15].

Man is created by God out of love, so begins somewhere and once, as a single subject, individually, as a conscious, free and rational personal being. "*And God said, Let us make man in the likeness and likeness of Our Lord, that He may possess the fish of the sea ... and all the earth*" (Genesis 1:27). Among all creatures, God alone creates God in particular. Man is not the result of a divine commandment as God created all other beings, things and universes, for the earth was not able to produce a being endowed with reason, freedom, conscience and will. God, through His great power and love, created man in the icon of Divine Glory, and gave him the likeness to which they must reach by their own work. Analyzing the scriptural text, we see the distinction between the singular "and said" and the plural "*Let's do*," man (singular), in our own (plural) icon of divine and likeness; and we come to the conclusion that man is a subject of the "*unseen God*" (Colossus 1:15). Then Scripture tells us the woman's doing precisely to elucidate what the ontological rendering of the divine icon is: "*And God made man in his icon and made him a man and a woman*" (Genesis 1: 27). The distinction between man and woman is of course unrelated to the ontological and indelible date of God's icon in man, for God is not divided into masculine and feminine, that is why His icon extends over the whole human nature. In Book of Faith 2,7 there is an account of how God created man: "*Then the Lord God took the dust of the earth, and made man blow a breath of life before him.*" What is important is not the material act, but the fact that human nature has been dual constituted from the flesh and soul through the breath of life of divine grace: „*for the flesh (man) to ascend to godliness and one grace to guide and walk through all creation..*".[16] The Greek soul-translated Hebrew nephesch has many meanings and would mean, in general, everything that is alive, even animals, yet it is not justified to define man's philosophy as RAW ANIMAL - because the spiritual nature of man is not based on body, soul, and reason, but on the quality of person. The person is linked ontologically to the creation of man in the icon of God and the dialogue, grace with God, the person embraces the human nature in its psycho-somatic, bodily and soul integral. Through personal spiritual quality, man is destined for deification.

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[15] Christos Yannaras - *Abecedar al credinţei (Elements of Faith: An Introduction to Orthodox Theology)*,, trad, Preot Dr. C-tin Coman, Bizantină, Buc. 1996, p.78

[16] Sfântul Grigore de Nyssa, *Marele Cuvânt Catehetic*;VI,2, trad. Pr. Grigore Teodorescu, Sofia, Bucureşti,1938, p. 34

For Christian theology the main quality of man given by God lies in the fact that man is a personal being endowed with reason, will and sentiment, with knowledge and self-consciousness, which links him to the past, present and future, but also to self, fellow, creation, and God. In the spirit of the terminological explanations:

"the person is not a nature [...]. In essence, what makes us different animal beings is the existence of our person [...], the person exists only in beings endowed with reason [...]. It is the intangible thing that the Incarnation of the Word has given to men and made them receive Grace [...], is a mystery, the mystery of the seal upon human, earthly nature"[17].

As a personal being in dialogue with God man is the crown and the beauty of creation, in which divine love is concentrated, which gives him a special status, gives him value and sense to all other ceremonies. **On this logic, no other being in the universe, known or unknown, has had and will not be of greater importance than man, because there is no other being created in the icon of God, for the fulfillment of which God assumed it saved and sanctified it through Christ.**

Man is the central being of the action, its material and spiritual axis. Patristic theology bases the teaching of man on his icon of God, (ontological evidence) and the likeness of God defined as perfection, through the sacredness of holiness as the fulfillment of man and man. Thus, man is not only a part of the world but also its synthesis. Man is the consciousness of creation, capable of contemplating and determining it. As St. Gregory of Nyssa shows, man's majesty is not in the likeness of the created, he is not merely a synthesis of the world in a small, microcosm, for this quality is "*both mice and mosquitoes ...*"[18]. The majesty, man's superiority in the world is given by the ability to contemplate God (*capax dei*) by being an icon of God (*imogo Dei)*, but especially by the finality of his existence, namely the acquisition of the state of holiness.

Man is a rational, free and conscious being who has the purpose of accomplishing the ultimate goal of the universe, he is a macrocosm, and the world can become a *macroanthropocosm* through man. Human solidarity, with nature, generates the relationship and harmony of the soul with the body, with which it forms a unity and tends to perfection. According to the anthropogenesis narrated by Moses, the divine icon of man and the likeness of God implies not only an opening to God, but also a permanent dialogue with all creation, because in the microcosmic structure of human nature its dual constitution, body-soul, as well as the fundamental duality of the created material and spiritual universe.

The divine icon in the men as a divine seal is the meeting point between divine and human. The divine face of man in his integrity refers to the nature of the whole man (body and soul), to his person who has a tension and an aspiration to the likeness of God, that is why man is a being of dialogue, of communication, of a social and sociable.

The harmony and unity of creation is given by the fact that all the existences within it are in relation to each other than by the fact that they all distinguish themselves by presenting a unity in diversity and in the last analysis by a general reason of the entire creation, cosmic by Christ, the archetype of man was made because:

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[17] Alexandros Kalomiros, *Sfintii Parinti, despre originile şi destinul cosmosului şi omului,(The Holy Fathers on the Origins and the Destiny of Cosmos and Man)*, ed. a II-a, traducere Ioan Ică, Deisis, Sibiu 2003, p. 58-62

[18] Sfântul Grigore de Nyssa, *Omilii la Facere,* XVI, trad. Pr. T. Bodogae, în P.S.B. 30, Bucureşti 1998, p. 46

"all that are after God have their existence from God, through each are in every being according to the true Reason. Firstly, because none of the existence, either of the very honest and superior ones, is loose from the general relation to the honest"[19].

The position of man in the cosmos is central, man appears as the synthesis and crown of creation, being created in the icon of God (Genesis 2:7), being solidarity with the earth, with the whole creation, but also with God.

All Christian thinking views man in the perspective of Christ the Son of God Incarnate. Christ has one person who has two human beings: divine and human. Christian theology shows that the Person of Christ is contained entirely of divinity from eternity and human nature as the incarnation of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, indicating that Christ assumed human nature as a species apart from sin, but talk of the human nature altered by sin. In the perverted state of sin, man as a person who assumes individual human nature remains an icon of God, but his face does not have a normal functioning structure, and he is also alert. The logical and ontological sense of assuming the whole of human nature by Christ is precisely its fulfillment, or the elevation to the state of continual being defined by the term of deification. This is the result of a permanent relationship through divine grace or energy, and it does not mean ontologically a change of being in an evolutionary sense through the appearance of another species. Devotion or state of holiness shows human nature at its peak and in this state man is conscious and free of depression. Devotion is acquired through union with Christ, is the result of personal choices and experiences, but with socio-community effects.

Universal, the whole human nature has been perfected through the Person and work of Christ in whom the Holy Trinity works. This objective is accomplished by the Christian teaching about salvation in Jesus and acquired on a personal level by those who accept a consciously and freely relationship with Christ being come to fulfillment, to acquire holiness. So the man through whom Christian theology sees and explains the world is Christ, the Son of God, the Incarnate Logos, the Reason in which the purposes of creation are in unity, that is why Christ is God-Man. Through Christ, St. Basil the Great emphasizes the inner bond between God and creation, because God: "*not only entered into the whole being of the world but put all its parts in harmony with one another and made a harmonious whole, appropriate and agree with Him*"[20]. The relationship between humanity and divinity is not that of matter and object, but of love as a person-to-person, accomplished by the presence of grace that transforms and sanctifies man and creation.

The presence and work of God through grace in creation is channeled, which man, who ontologically through divine grace has planted in its nature the icon of Christ, and hence a religious, internal life through introspection, but also an external one by referring to the fellow in which it is present God, with whom man has a dialogue and a permanent meeting.

"If you remember yourself – says St. Basil the Great- you no longer need to discover God in the other creatures; you will contemplate in yourself as in a microcosm, the great wisdom of your creator. From your intangible soul you will know that God is intangible ... he admires Master for the wonderful icon by which he has bound your soul with your body .... Of all the living creatures, only man created him with the faculty of standing, so that you may know, from his position, that your life is a divine origin ..., the quadrupeds look to the ground ...; only man has his eyes ready for heaven ...".[21]

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[19] Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Ambigua,* trad. Pr. D. Stăniloae, în P.S.B. 80 E.I.B., Bucureşti 1980, p. 267
[20] Sfântul Vasile cel Mare, *Omilii la Hexaimeron,* I, 7, în PSB., nr. 17, IBM., Bucureşti 1986, p.78
[21] Sfântul Vasile cel Mare*, Omilii şi cuvântări*, III , VII-VIII, pp. 373-374

This reality shows that man is the only creature made to contemplate God (*capax and imago Dei*), whose dialogue partner God can become, but not a nature with God, but the fulfillment of human nature. The resemblance or fulfillment of the human being as the supreme mission and purpose of man represents the ontological state of human nature: "*in some respects is the development of grace of potency, planted in man, especially that the likeness is but a development of the icon*"[22] accomplished eschatologically, because in this life it is only anticipated. Undergraduate characterizes a situation "*in-the-life*" but current, but the perfect human unity is related to an eschatological reality, being conceived as a "stability" in divinity, when it will be a "*new heaven and a new earth*" (II Peter 3:13). This is the only possible evolution from the Christian perspective, understood ontologically within species, and not between species. So, in temporal earthly man, man remains a man no matter how religiously, intellectually, technically and socially evolved, as well as in the eternal, temporal dimension in which he enters by death, remaining in dependence and rallying with God, felt as a continuous lack for those in the state of suffering, and as joy and endless happiness for those who are through Christ in the state of communion and eternal dialogue. This is the meaning of man as a rational, conscious, free and affective being, this is the path from non-existence to being, reached only by union with Christ, "*The Way, Truth and Life*" (John 14:6).

CONCLUSIONS

The fundamental questions about human nature in the ontological and the phenomenological perspective have received various answers in history. The Philosophy presents man as a rational, autonomous and contextual being, both at the personal level by disciplining the instincts and at the inter-personal level through social laws.

In the coordinates of modern thinking, the description of the human nature in terms of knowledge focused only on the powers of man's mind, because of the autonomy of science and technology that pretend to explain everything that exists. Generally, man is defined as the most advanced being, who has reached this state due to the instinct of self-preservation or struggle for survival.

Without confusing the philosophical ideas, because they are different in this issue, with the ideas specific to the Christian religion, we must conclude that man is not just a rational animal but a rational animal deified. The site of deification or human fulfillment is potentially encompassed in every man by being created in the icon of God. Through the divine icon, man is a rational, conscious and free being in dialogue with God-the Creator.

Through man's activity, man is capable of philosophy and science. God's quality of being God's icon is native, ontological and indelible; that is, it is not lost whatever it does in life, but it also does not bring any added value. Man is born as a person and according to what he becomes a personality.

The apostle of personality, the fullest fulfillment of humanity, is accomplished by Jesus Christ, the God-man, the Paradigm and the ultimate goal of the world. Christ as the fulfillment of the human being is in a permanent opening to each and every person, because only in co-operation with Him man constructs the path from death to endless life.

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CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE END OF MATERIALISM: SEEKING IDENTITY AND HARMONY IN A DARK ERA

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ABSTRACT

"I am me", but what does this mean? For centuries humans identified themselves as conscious beings with free will, beings that are important in the cosmos they live in. However, modern science has been trying to reduce us into unimportant pawns in a cold universe and diminish our sense of consciousness into a mere illusion generated by lifeless matter. Our identity in the cosmos is nothing more than a deception and all the scientific evidence seem to support this idea. Or is it not? The goal of this paper is to discard current underlying dogmatism (axioms taken for granted as "self-evident") of modern mind research and to show that consciousness seems to be the ultimate frontier that will cause a major change in the way exact sciences think. If we want to re-discover our identity as luminous beings in the cosmos, we must first try to pinpoint our prejudices and discard them. Materialism is an obsolete philosophical dogma and modern scientists should try to also use other premises as the foundation of their theories to approach the mysteries of the self. Exact sciences need to examine the world with a more open mind, accepting potentially different interpretations of existing experimental data in the fields of brain research, which are currently not considered simply on the basis of a strong anti-spiritual dogmatism. Such interpretations can be compatible with the notion of an immaterial spirit proposed by religion for thousands of years. Mind seems that is not the by-product of matter, but the opposite: its master. No current materialistic theory can explain how matter may give rise to what we call "self" and only a drastic paradigm shift towards more idealistic theories will help us avoid rejecting our own nature.
Keywords: mind; brain; materialism; consciousness; dogmatism; axioms; neuroscience;

Figure 1: Brain

INTRODUCTION

In a recent research, scientists found out that the human brain could store ten times more memories than previously thought (according to models used by scientists based on rat brains) [1]. The news was re-posted by various prestigious science portals, one of them being Popular Science [2]. Reading this headline and skimming through the article makes someone very happy to know that scientists are starting to understand more and more things about the

brain and its processes. Science is really living the dream of increasing knowledge and at the end everything will be revealed. This kind of optimism runs through all brain research. And yet, a small 'footnote' mentioned in the article points us towards a well-hidden secret. In that footnote it is mentioned that scientists claim things about the memory capacity of the brain even though they "*still don't understand much of how they work, including how their size affects how information is transmitted or stored in the brain*" (sic). So, to put it simply: we have created models to analyze the brain, but we do not know how and even if these models work like brain works. And yet, based on these models we make predictions and draw conclusions. This is unfortunately not an isolated incident. Researchers across the world are usually equally blunt into supporting a materialistic notion of consciousness even though our understanding of the brain does not support such a notion. For example, research related to reading the brain signals and controlling e.g. a machine [3], is often portrayed as direct evidence that what we feel as 'consciousness' is nothing more than an elaborate illusion generated by simple brain signals generated by cells.

Such research is conducted in the context of a sector of science called "neuroscience", which for many years now tries to solve the mystery of human consciousness. Even though there is great progress in the analysis of the mechanisms of our brain, the key to human consciousness remains well hidden. "At least for now", some scientists say, thus alleviating any worries that science might never reach to the conclusions already promoted as 'true' by the proponents of materialism. That belief that we will someday explain the very nature of our identity based on our current models would be romantic at least, if it was not a showcase of blunt dogmatism as well: All these scientific efforts to understand the 'final frontier' regarding the reality of who we are, are based on specific axioms (materialism, mechanistic view of the cosmos, reductionism) which are promoted as self-evident truths, instead of arbitrarily chosen starting points. And none of these axioms leave any space for us (conscious humans) in the cosmos. The fact that modern science cannot discover consciousness is not a temporary gap of knowledge, but more of the result of specific principles on which science is currently based. We have created a universe void of humans and now we are surprised we cannot find humans in it.

This paper does not attempt to offer an exhaustive record of all knowledge existing concerning the human mind, but rather to provide some insight on why the explanation of human consciousness lies beyond the limits of exact science as it is currently based on the abovementioned axioms. It is shown that only a drastic paradigm-shift of science away from the materialistic view of the cosmos can help us truly understand the nature of what seems to make us who we really are. My identity as a human being is something which cannot be reduced to a set of lifeless particles and any attempt to come in harmony with our true nature passes through a drastic change in our way of thinking.

Electrons and electromagnetic fields race through our brain. Is that "consciousness"? Or is consciousness controlling those electrons?

1. WHY NEUROSCIENCE WILL NEVER EXPLAIN CONSCIOUSNESS

Some scientists today believe that they can explain the mind by just analyzing the mechanisms of the brain. They seem to believe that by finding how neurons interact with each other will lead them to fully understand the nature of human consciousness. This view is based on the principles (axioms) of materialism and reductionism (and up to a point to the mechanistic view of the cosmos as well): The cosmos is made up of matter and everything

can be reduced to explanations based on (mechanistic) interactions of that matter[1]. And it is the main purpose of true philosophy to find, pinpoint and show the underlying axioms of all views, criticize them, discuss them and potentially try new ones to discover new paths of knowledge. This section contains a list of arguments that show why human consciousness cannot be explained by merely explaining the chemical-physical mechanisms of neuron activity in our brain. A short basic epistemological note seems necessary at this point: Every scientific theory is based on some foundations, called axioms (or principles). Those axioms are – by definition – not proved; they are just taken for granted in order to start creating a theory. That does not mean that the theory is necessarily wrong – just that it cannot be proven beyond the shadow of a doubt based on our current scientific way of thinking. Every theory must be based on something and that creates inherent limits to the validity claims the theory can make. Gödel's incompleteness theorem cast the last stone upon the now disproved idea of proving anything, so we must all be aware of those limitations when talking about "proofs". In any case, the only thing we can do is to question the existing axioms and try to formulate new theories based on new ones. We will be surprised to see that those theories can be as "correct" as the old ones. This is not something bad or wrong. It is just the way science works.

Discarding the long-held belief that current neuroscience will explain everything concerning consciousness – the very thing which determines our identity – is of extreme importance if we are to start investigating other paths to interpreting reality; a reality which for thousands of years included the one thing which modern science does not want to hear about: immaterial spirit.

1.1 Finding correlations does not mean we understand mind or consciousness

There is a deeper problem concerning the human consciousness. It may be that the subjectivity of consciousness and the lack of a formal definition do not prevent neuroscience from finding the "Neural Correlates of Consciousness" (also known as NCC). But what does it actually mean to find these correlates is a whole different matter. Ideally, neuroscience should explain facts about consciousness in terms of facts about the neural activity. If not, then we are only rationally justified in believing that brain and mind are somehow correlated, but not that human consciousness is in fact a wholly natural phenomenon [4, 5]. Christof Koch, a professor of biology and engineering at the California Institute of Technology, seeks those neural correlates; something which generally means the kinds of electrical activities that occur in the brain each and every time that a certain conscious experience occurs. Koch has made the neural correlates of consciousness real science by bringing progressively greater precision to assessing what is happening in the brain, in real time, when subjective experiences are sensed or felt. But it important to note that correlation is not cause, as Koch correctly points out. And the correlations so far describe specific sensations, not a unified consciousness [6]. The difference is important to note. It is a mistake to confuse one thing for another: many things can be interconnected but that does not automatically create a cause-effect relationship between them (if causality exists at all, but this is a greater philosophical problem out of the scope of this paper). The so far correlations found do not prove anything concerning the true nature of consciousness; where "true

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[1] The problem of the definition of what "matter" actually is, is another important aspect which is outside of the scope of this paper. Even though many people believe that matter is well defined, it is not: particles seem to be waves of energy which materialize upon observation or interaction with something else and science is still searching the basis of matter (e.g. Higgs boson).

nature" mainly refers to the way we feel we are "we" in our everyday lives. We are still far away from knowing what the cause of consciousness is, let alone say that it is only a "natural" cause based on electricity currents. Confusing correlation with cause is a "mistake" or – even worse – an offspring of hard materialistic dogmatism.

After all, who can say that a thought is made up of electrons without challenging his logic? For example, can the thought "the circumference of a circle is equal to $2\pi r$" be made up of electricity? Thinking of thought as a set of things or objects is a categorical error. It is something "that it is not even an error", as Pauli used to say when a student of his presented an idea that was completely off the scope of the question asked. Is a thought made up of something material and if yes, how can that be? In what sense does that make sense? Electrons are electrons. Neurons are neurons. A thought is a thought and cannot be made of the abovementioned materials, simply because thought is something inherently different than these "things". Many electrons form "many electrons", not a human "thought". The words in this document – either on paper or in 01's in computer's memory – mean nothing except for a human who reads them. It is common for scientists to say "This has no meaning" when presented with metaphysical questions (try to ask "What existed before the universe existed?" for example). Could we be trying to answer similar meaningless questions by making connections that simple are not there in the first place?

The TV analogy example

A good example of how our theories about the brain might be wrong is the TV analogy: Look at the TV in your home. It seems that it generates the TV show you watch. Every empirical data you have, point towards this direction. Try to examine the inside of the television and you will see that its circuits indeed fire up and "do something" as the image you see is generated. What more proof would you need, right? What is more, when the TV breaks, the image stops. In the same way humans are being left unconscious when their brain is damaged (by the way one of the most – supposedly – compelling arguments in favor of the brain as generator of 'consciousness'). And yet, in reality, the image you see in the TV is not generated by the TV; it is just received by it. Correlation does not mean anything besides what it is: correlation. Expanding this into other conclusions is risky and sometimes even unscientific – at least when this is done without a strong disclaimer.

1.2 The mind is more than the sum of the brain cells (why reductionism is wrong)

David Chalmers, an Australian philosopher of mind, claims that consciousness is not an accidental derivative of reality working randomly but a fundamental part of reality existing permanently. For decades, there had been a progressive demystification of consciousness. But for Chalmers no matter how much neuroscience we learn, we will never explain consciousness. No matter how good the correlations of brain to mind are, they could never literally be "mind". It seems that there must be something extra in consciousness, which can never be explained by anything physical, chemical, or biological (at least in the way those terms are defined today) [7]. Neuroscience is inherently reductionist, since it plans to solve the problem of consciousness by finding its physical substrate and reducing every function of the mind to interactions on that substrate. But this method is hopelessly flawed, and for a simple reason: self-consciousness, at least when felt from the inside, feels like more than the sum of our brain cells' activity (which in any case "feel" nothing on their own). Even if brain plays a role as a substrate, this may mean nothing for the actual state of being conscious (in the same way that buying a new TV means nothing regarding to your

favorite shows, which are still there being broadcasted, same and unchanged). Any explanation of our experience solely in terms of our neurons will never explain our experience, because we do not experience our neurons but something more. To believe otherwise is to indulge in a simple categorical mistake [8]. And again, not knowing exactly what that "something more" is does not nullify its existence. Our experience of us being "us" is something we experience every day and which transcends the sum of each individual neuron activity, something more than the experience of electrical current passing through neuron connections. If we believe what neurologists say, we could have a Printed Circuit Board "feeling" and realizing "itself" like we do. However, a PCB cannot "feel" and cannot have a consciousness, for the same reason that a stone – no matter how well it is designed or how complicated its molecular structures are – cannot have "life" in it. If complexity alone is the generator of the illusion of consciousness, then even the Internet's World Wide Web itself should have experienced "consciousness" a long time ago. You cannot explain apples with oranges. No matter how many oranges you analyze.

1.3 Neuroscience only explains things defined in functional terms, but consciousness cannot be given a functional definition

Neuroscience is very useful and can of course be used to explain many things. For instance, memory performance in sea slugs can be explainable in terms of synaptic strength and gene expression. But it seems that only things defined in functional terms can be explained (e.g. the neural mechanism that explains memory function). The problem presented is then the following: consciousness cannot be given a functional definition [5]. This means that essentially its true nature cannot be (fully) neuro-scientifically explained.

Assume for a moment that we have discovered all the neural mechanisms that exist. These mechanisms will explain a whole set of psychological functions (e.g. the workings of memory) and among these there will be functions we associate with consciousness. For example, the function of bodily damage bringing us in an internal state that causes us to withdraw our hand form the fire, where we associate our internal state with being in the conscious state of feeling pain. The problem is that the neural mechanisms only concern the causal transactions among states and not the nature of the states themselves. That is, the description of how neurons function, fails to capture what is distinctive about pain, namely that it hurts. In other words, the relations captured by the neurological analysis do not claim anything regarding the very nature of our mind. Whatever mechanisms are revealed by research, have nothing to do with the actual state of "being" – the great and still unanswered question of philosophy of the self.

The above-mentioned issues are discarded by neuroscientists as irrelevant: Explaining things does not mean we can explain everything now, they counter-argue [4]. True. But isn't this an argument that can be invoked in favor of a non-materialistic explanation of the mind as well? In order to stay within the scope of scientific inquiry, consciousness must have some functional aspect and yet, every aspect of our conscious experience is not related to any function whatsoever. It is when we actually do nothing that we feel the most active, as Cicero once said. It is when we stand alone without doing anything that we discover our self. Should we totally discard one potential explanation simply because we like the other better? Whereas we have good reason to believe consciousness is a material phenomenon since it correlates so well with neural activity [4, 5], we also have reason to believe the material and the conscious belong to a different level as it will be described in the next section.

"if mental phenomena are in fact nothing more than emergent properties and functions of the brain, their relation to the brain is fundamentally unlike every other emergent property and function in nature"[2]

As David Chalmers (1995) stated, while cognitive neuroscience can explain how the brain enables informational processing of the mind, it is incapable of explaining the qualitative experience that accompanies it. No matter what knowledge we gain about the visual processing of color and how precisely we are able to describe it, the quality of sensory experience of red cannot be known unless experienced [9]. Analyze and describe the way we taste a peach in the best way possible; again, you will not be able to understand how a peach tastes until you actually eat one. Another attempt to counter reductionism comes from a broad category of theorists who look to the relatively new science of complexity, or emergence, to explain the brain's relation to the mind. Emergence theory holds that interactions between lower-order phenomena can give birth to higher-order phenomena with properties which cannot themselves be reduced to the lower-order interactions.

Consciousness is clearly an emergent property. The latest evidence is that there is no master site of consciousness or control in the brain. If that is the case, looking to the subatomic level is clearly a move in the wrong direction. It makes as much sense as trying to understand the properties of water by studying hydrogen and oxygen. Even though water emerges from the combination of the two, studying its components tells us little about water itself. Just as the wetness of water cannot be found in the hydrogen and oxygen molecules that constitute it, so the complex qualities of mind, like reason, decision-making, reflection, and emotion cannot be found in the behavior of our neurons. The advantage of this way of thinking is that while it does not deny the biological roots of mind, it nonetheless acknowledges the validity of higher orders of human experience [10]. And we should not forget about subjectivity, which is another major piece of the puzzle. No other emergent property (e.g. liquidity) has subjectivity [7] and yet, subjectivity is an inherent (and important) part of human consciousness. Discarding that from the picture is wrong; every theory trying to account for consciousness should have a special place reserved for that notion which seems to be unique for conscious beings.

1.4 There is more than explaining things bottom-up

During the compilation of this paper, millions of neurons were working in my brain. Molecules used chemicals to transfer messages and everything in my brain was working to produce the result you (and not your neurons) see. At the same time, on another (higher) level, I was thinking about what to write next. I decided what to do, why I wanted to finish this article, why I was interested in the topic et cetera. Confusing what happens at a microscopic level with what decisions I make as a person at a higher level is another type of common error in analyzing consciousness only on the basis of neurological activity.

As Templeton prize-winning cosmologist George Ellis said, "The standard mistake that fundamentalists make is to posit a partial cause as the whole cause. Yes, the neurons are there. That's a partial cause of what's going on. What these neuroscientists are missing, though, is the top-down action in the brain, which is the part that gives life its actual meaning. And if you only choose to look from the bottom up you will never see that meaning. Think of a jumbo jet flying. The bottom-up view of why it flies is because the

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[2] B. Allan Wallace, *The Taboo of Subjectivity: Toward a New Science of Consciousness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 136.
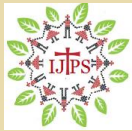
particles are impacting the wing from below and moving a bit slower than the particles above the wing. The top-down version of why the plane is flying is because someone decided to build the plane, employed a lot of people to use computer aided design tools for the design of the plane and then a lot more people to build it. At the same level of why the plane is flying lies the fact that the pilot is sitting at the controls and is making it fly. Some physicists tend to miss this top down view. And it's the same with neuroscientists. To return to the flight analogy, they would say that all that is making the pilot fly is the firing of some neurons in his brain. But then they would be missing the fact that he had decided to be a pilot when he was a kid. He got enthusiastic about it; he worked to raise the money for his training and managed to overcome obstacles in his journey to fulfilling his dream. Neuroscience just messes all of that up; or just blatantly ignores them completely. It is unable to see those higher levels because it is focused on the lower levels [10]. The mind cannot be the same as the brain, because the mind also has a top-down causal influence on the brain. And this refers not only to examples of cognitive therapies exploiting neuroplasticity [7], but more generally to the way our human free will (which is again discarded on the basis of adherence to specific philosophical dogmas) affects our life per se.

In other words, the mind can affect the brain and vice versa. And ignoring that reality is neither scientifically nor philosophically sound. The willful, mindful effort can alter brain function, and such self-directed brain changes are a genuine reality. All experience shows that the arrow of causation relating brain and mind is bidirectional [11]. Deliberately choosing to ignore one of the main potential directions of influence drastically limits the way we examine our mind. *"The most striking feature is how much of mainstream [materialistic] philosophy of mind is obviously false…. In the philosophy of mind, obvious facts about the mental, such as that we all really do have subjective conscious mental states are routinely denied by many of the advanced thinkers in the subject."[3] "Nowhere in the laws of physics or in the laws of the derivative sciences, chemistry and biology, is there any reference to consciousness or mind."[4]*

1.5 The human memory problem

The memory functionality of the brain is another problematic area which indicates potential gaps in our understanding. For example, much research has been conducted on animals from which scientists have removed large part of their brain, but they still continue to remember things they have learned [12, 13, 14]. When we remove a section of the brain which seems to be the one which holds the memories, another part of the brain takes on that role. Scientists removed surgically sections of the brain of chickens where they saw (via radioactive substances put into the brain) that some new tricks that those chickens had learnt were stored, but the chickens still remembered how to do the tricks [15]. Such results show that founding the functionality of the memory only on the material substrate of the brain may be missing important aspects of that functionality.

If memory is stored in the brain, then the cells or at least their structure should remain exactly the same for years in the sections where the memory is stored. But as we now know, this does not happen; research has shown that all the cells of the brain change constantly [16, 17, 18, 19]. If the area of the brain which is related to learning is destroyed, then the brain recreates this region in another place [20]. What is more, the problems posed by brain

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[3] John Searle, *The Rediscovery of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 3.
[4] John Eccles and Daniel Robinson, *The Wonder of Being Human: Our Brain and Our Mind* (New York: Free Press, 1984), 37.

plasticity research are not limited to memory. The cells of our brain change every day. How do we remain the "same" person if ever-changing matter is all that we base our existence upon? How can you interpret more easily this phenomenon, if not via admitting the existence of an immaterial "something" which resides outside the brain (or transcends the brain) and controls its material substance?

This is more than just a philosophical trick; it is something deeply related with the very nature of our self. And it should not be disregarded by science as something irrelevant. Even though modern scientists try to persuade us that philosophy is dead, in fact philosophy today is more relevant than ever. All things examined by science are in one way or another related to philosophy and the assumptions we make are related to specific philosophical opinions; knowing these opinions (and having the courage to question them) is crucial for scientists to understand the true nature of their theories.

2. ARGUMENTS FOR A MORE IDEALISTIC VIEW OF THE MIND

As scientists try to unlock the mysteries of consciousness, the old debate about monism-dualism comes into the surface. This section presents some arguments that could be used in favor of a more non-materialistic (idealistic) interpretation of the phenomena of the mind. Science tries to explain phenomena that are spiritual with tools that are specifically designed to unlock the mysteries of matter. If a scientific theory has the underlying dogma that no spirit exists, then how can it find spirit even if it is there? There is evidence which provide a hint towards what seems to be the right direction, but our compasses are calibrated so that they will never look that way. It is true that we cannot be certain of the nature of consciousness with the things we know now and that is exactly the point of this paper: to show that research on the topic must continue with a mind free of any dogmas and prejudice. All in all, the belief in the non-existence of spirit can be as dogmatic as the belief in the existence of spirit.

This more idealistic way of seeing the brain can take many forms. For scientists like Rupert Sheldrake, one of the most powerful explanatory tools for understanding the workings of life and mind is the physical notion of the "field", first introduced to science by Michael Faraday in the 19th century. "From electromagnetic fields, to gravitational fields to quantum matter fields, these field theories have taken over physics in such a way that everything is now seen as energy within fields", according to Sheldrake. "As Sir Karl Popper put it, 'Through modern physics, materialism has transcended itself, because matter is no longer the fundamental explanatory principle. Fields and energy are.' So then when we come to the mind and the brain, what if the brain is a system that's organized by fields as well?"[10]. In any case the simple question "What is a particle?" is not so self-evident or "materialistic" as it first seems. (See Consciousness and Quantum Mechanics section below) In general, explaining consciousness with energy fields is something that could provide a valid alternative that fits many of the properties of consciousness we see. And in any case, it should be noted that the point is not to prove anything, just to show that there are other possibly viable solutions to the problem under examination. For others, the non-materialistic nature of our consciousness could stem from modern quantum mechanics. There we have observed that the observer can affect the outcome of the experiment just by observing it (see below for double slits experiment analysis). This kind of effect to the outcome of the experiment is not possible by material interactions between particles. Could our consciousness be made of something non-materialistic as Neumann postulated?

In summary, idealism and dualism have much less to account for than materialism. As Keith Ward said, unlike materialism, what other more idealistic explanations don't have to do is to explain away the personal experience of every human being. We are something that we all understand it to be something different than voltage or particles moving. And at the end that is the best argument in favor of a more spiritual view of the brain.

"*No single brain area is active when we are conscious and idle when we are not. Nor does a specific level of activity in neurons signify that we are conscious. Nor is there a chemistry in neurons that always indicates consciousness.*"[5]

2.1 Function has many definitions

The great philosopher William James argued that all the problems in brain research arise from the monolithic way in which we understand the function of the brain. Materialistic science – he said – can think of the brain function only in the "function that produces something" way. However, "function" can have other meanings as well. Many things function in a way to "allow things to happen", like when your hand pulls a trigger so as to remove the barrier holding the gun to go off. Function could also mean "function to allow transmission of things", like a colored glass (the function of which is to allow the transmission of light through it). The brain could act in one of the other two ways of "function", thus being simply a way to allow souls to manifest themselves in this world [21]. (Remember the TV analogy described above)

This is a very interesting alternative in interpreting data, which all scientists dealing with the problem of the brain should always have in mind. The definitions we use could sometimes affect the result we get. And as Aristotle said, the questions almost always include the answer; researching for the mind into the brain via matter-based questions makes it certain that no mind will ever be discovered. Researching for the generating function of the brain regarding consciousness makes it certain that there is no possibility to discover any other potential functions it may possess. All the above is important, but they seem even more crucial if one takes into account that modern science has a very frightening record of imposing specific definitions on things which can be defined in many other ways.

2.2 Consciousness and Quantum Mechanics

An interesting debate is going on related to quantum mechanics and the possible role of human consciousness on the result of a measurement [22]. The 'mystical' wave function produces a set of possibilities that all exist simultaneously (a phenomenon known as quantum superposition). One of the quantum mechanics interpretations claims that only when a human observer observes the particle, does the function collapse to a single "reality". This interpretation states that the "thing" that actually causes the wave function to collapse is the consciousness of the human observer. This is also known as the Von Neumann-Wigner interpretation [23]. This theory solves many problems of quantum mechanics. Consider for example the double slit experiment. The electron actually "chooses" to be a wave or a particle only after the measurement/ observation. But what is "observation"? Many scientists have published papers which examine the role of consciousness in the collapse of the wave function [24] and it seems that the possibility that consciousness actually causes the electron to "decide" is an explanation one cannot simply ignore. Many people believe that Wigner's

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[5] Mario Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary, The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist's Case for the Existence of the Soul (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 109

interpretation is old and, thus, outdated. But such an argument is fundamentally flawed: being old does not necessarily mean that something is wrong in any case (if such was the case we should have stopped reading Parmenides, Aristotle and Plato a long time ago). It is true that this is just one of the multiple potential interpretations of quantum mechanics; currently more than ten are still active [25]. But it is the most philosophically sound. First of all, this interpretation is totally mathematically compatible with the results [26]. So, we cannot discard it on the basis of non-conformance with the experimental data. The only reason physics today discard this interpretation, is its opposition to the classical physics model that "reality" exists somewhere independently from us (another assumption which has turned into dogma). Wigner actually shifted to those interpretations (and away from the idea that consciousness causes collapse) in his later years. And it is important to note that this did not happen because the interpretation proved wrong (in any case can that ever happen for an interpretation? – another interesting question) but partly because he was embarrassed that the "consciousness causes collapse" idea can lead to a kind of solipsism [27]. What is more, no other interpretation can explain why the wave function does not collapse before the observation. If one considers observation to simply be the interaction with the measurement instruments (i.e. the interaction of non-living matter with other non-living matter), then why does the electron not collapse to a specific state due to its interaction with all the other physical elements of the experiment setting? What makes the "measurement" special? How is the measuring device different from any other material in the experimental device? (the air, the cosmic radiation, the other particles, the numerous fields existing in the experiment site and so on). The answer is – according to modern physics – that essentially it is not different at all. But then, many philosophical problems arise. Could this mean that any experiment regarding the collapse of the particles' wave function could be conducted via interaction with anything? In the double slit experiment, no interaction with the gravity field, with electromagnetic fields or with other particles in the air results in the collapse - only when a human observer observes do we have that collapse. Something similar to the above experiments and equally important is observed in the Quantum Zeno effect in which an unstable particle, if observed continuously, will never decay [28]. It is also important to note that the double slit experiment shows not only that the observer affects the thing observed, but that the effect of the observer traces back in time, as in the Wheeler's delayed choice experiment [29] [30]. This adds additional problems to the attempt to explain these experiments via a strictly materialistic interpretation – matter affects matter only forward in the direction of the arrow of time. Some counter-argue that the abovementioned interpretation is not falsifiable. This could be true in a sense: there is no way to observe the result of an experiment without anyone observing the result anyway. But this is also an argument against other interpretations which ignore the effect of consciousness on the result: how can you determine there is no such effect if you haven't conducted any experiment without that element in the experiments you conduct? What is more, we must remember that falsifiability does not guarantee the validity of a theory; it is just a criterion we would like to have in place to make our work of analyzing the alternatives easier. It is nice to have, but not necessary to make a theory scientific or valid. How falsifiable are for example other (seemingly more valid for modern physicists) interpretations, like the multiverse theory which calls for the instant creation of a new universe every nanosecond that a wave function collapse takes place? All in all, the conscious observer seems to affect the cosmos and reality. This is something accepted or heavily discussed among scientists today. The cat

seems to be both dead and alive until an observer observes it. And the current way science thinks, is not compatible at all with the above-mentioned observations.

2.3 Non-local consciousness & Near-Death Experiences (NDE)

Research from known scientists and universities has shown that consciousness may not be an exact synonym to brain functions through providing strong indications that the link between consciousness and the brain might not be as tight as we might think. Even though such research and conclusions are often discarded as pseudoscience, it must be noted that prestigious scientists or institutions are involved in it. And although it is true that the use of such research results by pseudoscience proponents is a problem that does exist, it must be noted that the pseudoscience problem is not limited only to consciousness research; screening of the validity of a source and logical analysis of the conclusions presented is something which is always needed in all fields of science (and for all conclusions, atheistic-friendly conclusions included).

Research regarding non-local consciousness has been conducted by the Princeton University and reached impressive conclusions [31]. The Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) program, which flourished for nearly three decades under the aegis of Princeton University's School of Engineering and Applied Science, discovered many empirical anomalies which are inconsistent with the established models of our era. As the university official page claims, "PEAR's contribution to this expansion of the scientific worldview has been its accumulation of huge bodies of consciousness-correlated empirical evidence that the subjective/ objective dichotomy of Cartesian philosophy is no longer entirely viable". One of the implications of that research is that "accommodation of these anomalies within a functional scientific framework will require the explicit inclusion of consciousness as an active agent in the establishment of physical reality" (sic). The implications of consciousness in quantum mechanics discussed above is a similar example of how our consciousness seems to affect things outside the limitations of our body.

Near-death experience (NDE) is another field which shows promising leads towards a non-materialistic view of the cosmos. They were first reported by Dr. Pirn van Lommel in a prestigious scientific journal, the medical journal "The Lancet" [32]. NDEs are perhaps the most intriguing challenge to the neuroscientific mainstream view and more data is emerging from a growing body of related research. Throughout the ages and across cultures, people have reported a variety of mystical phenomena surrounding the dying process. But with the technological explosion of the twentieth century, one medical advance in particular has opened a significant window into the phenomenology of dying – namely, our ability to resuscitate people, to bring them back from the dead.

It is easy to understand why these experiences have such a profound psychological and spiritual impact. And that, along with the fact that exploring the borders of life and death is so difficult, is the reason why objections to the validity of NDE experiences are not few. Reports of NDEs are often discarded by the scientific community as hallucinations; they do not fit at all with the current picture drawn by the current scientific theories. As neuropsychiatrist and renowned near-death researcher Peter Fenwick points out, "the simple fact that people have these experiences does not in itself prove anything one way or the other regarding the existence of consciousness outside the brain". Simply put, how do we know the NDE is not just a brain-generated illusion? According to the "dying brain hypothesis" as put forward by psychologist Susan Blackmore, all the specific phenomena associated with the classic NDE can be accounted for by established brain responses to the "severe stress,

extreme fear, and cerebral anoxia" that would naturally accompany a brush with death. But riddled throughout the NDE literature are accounts that seem to suggest that there is more going on in these experiences than what can fit into the materialist picture of a simple hallucination. Besides the Lommel paper, there are many other papers discussing similar incidents reported in literature. And not all of them can be easily discarded [33]. For example, eminent cardiologist Fred Schoonmaker conducted an 18-year study of 1,400 near-death experiences, including those of about 55 persons whose experiences took place while flat EEG readings were recorded [34]. Prospective studies, reviewed groups of individuals and then found out who had an NDE. In general, close to 3,500 individual cases between 1975 and 2005 had been reviewed in one or another study by more than 50 researchers or teams of researchers [35]. The International Association for Near-death Studies (IANDS) holds conferences, at regular intervals, on the topic of near-death experiences. The first meeting was a medical seminar at Yale University, New Haven (CT) in 1982. Since then conferences have been held in major U.S. cities, almost annually [36]. Many universities also continue to carry out research related to the matter [37]. On the whole, there are strong scientific indications that consciousness is something which survives the physical death of the body. And if we follow the falsification logic of Popper, the validity of only one of these cases would suffice to discard the whole materialistic theories of the brain.

Additionally to the above, even more startling indications that materialism may be wrong come from cases where humans appear to have a normal life even though they do not have a normal brain (at least in the way we define it). The research of John Lorber is the most famous example. In 1980, Roger Lewin published an article in Science about Lorber's studies on cerebral cortex losses. In that he reported the case of a Sheffield University student who had a measured IQ of 126 and passed a Mathematics Degree but who had hardly any discernible brain matter at all since his cortex was extremely reduced by hydrocephalus [38]. For an instrument that is so delicate that even the slightest problem might result in turning into a plant or dead, having example of people who function perfectly with most of their brain missing is surely the counter-example needed to start thinking whether we took the wrong turn.

All of the above have led prominent researchers, such as the late Nobel-winning neuroscientist Sir John Eccles, to propose a dualist view of the problem, arguing that the human mind and consciousness may in fact constitute a separate, undiscovered entity apart from the brain [39].

2.4 Zombie arguments

Other arguments in favor of a less materialistic view of consciousness are related to what we feel every day: that we "are" ourselves and not a set of machinery working. Our brain is not a set of electrons, because a set of electrons is just "a set of electrons", not a thinking entity. We are not zombies [40], we are thinking human beings doing more than just feeling and reacting according to physical laws without being conscious of what we do [41].

If physicalism was right and if indeed everything we did could be explained by the action-reaction mechanistic model of our body, then there would be no room for what we feel and "know" that we have: that "something" which makes us humans, which makes us more than simple reacting machines. We know that we do not just react to things like zombies. We know that we do not just live according to automated processes and physical laws. We know that we are who we are. I know that it is "I" who speaks and not the physical laws governing the electrons in my brain. I know that I am the one writing now and not the

physical laws governing the universe. I know that I have free will and that what I write here is "mine" (and not product of a machine in the form of a human body with no intellect or consciousness), as you also know that what I write here is "mine". You may even write a comment to "me" complaining about what I wrote. Last but not least, we all understand that others we interact with are not zombies as well; they are conscious beings functioning according to what they decide and feel like. Not in a single moment do we think of the possibility that other human beings are just zombies (or robots); so how can a theory which actually defends such a view be considered so self-evident? In our everyday life we constantly adhere to the non-materialistic view of the mind, in how we behave towards our self and towards others. This might not look as "scientific", but perhaps it is more valid that any scientific view on the matter – especially because it is not (scientific in the strict sense of the word). Modern science seems to have difficulties to account for the simple things humans feel and it seems that we all need a more spiritual point of view to guide science back to us. After all, every scientific theory must adhere to the empirical data we have available. And this is a great chunk of data we seem to deliberately ignore.

3. THE NEED FOR A MORE SPIRITUAL SCIENCE

All contemporary neuroscience is based on classical physics. No surprise it supports the view of the self which is based on the brain and a set of mechanical laws. That is the only view that type of physics can come up with. It cannot explain how consciousness arises since there is simply no consciousness in classical physics; it was erased from the study of matter by Descartes' dualism (i.e. that mind and matter are separate). And it was on these foundations that Newton erected classical physics, the science of matter, which does not deal with mind in any form. By definition, Descartes's dualism predicts that mind cannot be explained from matter, and Newton's physics is an expression of dualism. Modern physics tries to examine reality as something existing "objectively" somewhere out there. And this objective reality does not have room for subjects (conscious humans). Neuroscientists are looking for consciousness based on tools which cannot detect consciousness by design [42].

However, it would be unfair to say that science has inherent limitations. It is not that the methods and institutions of (empirical) science somehow compel us to accept a materialistic explanation of the phenomenal world, but that we are forced into that path by our a priori adherence to material causes and axioms [43]. Modern science seems determined not to look for the source of consciousness anywhere else but in matter. But only a bad detective argues "The murderer can't be in the basement – because I'm afraid to look there". Some materialists admit that materialism cannot be shown to be valid a priori. Instead, they claim that since materialism has had such an impressive track-record in solving problems, we must assume it will continue to succeed. But this is plainly wrong. Materialism does not have an impressive track-record in explaining things at all. It was Christian theology, not materialism, which gave birth to modern science. Great scientists such as Newton, Kepler and Galileo tried to find the physical laws governing the universe in an attempt to unravel God's master plan of the cosmos. The need to read the "mind of God" was the philosophical stone which drove all scientific efforts during the time of Newton.

What is more, materialism inherently conflicts with the rationality of science: The dogma "in the beginning there was nothing, then nothing created something and now we only have some electrons and protons moving around randomly" cannot explain the existence of all-powerful universal physical laws or the emergence of the patterns we see. Theism on the other hand supports that rationality: The existence of universal physical laws

can be explained by the theory of a First Cause or a great Designer who actually put in place those laws. And the failure of materialism to account for the mind (as described above) is one of the most staggering examples of how dogmas can hinder the progress of science if we fail to see them [7]. Regarding the mind, it seems that the materialistic dogma cannot explain the subject-object (human-matter) relationship, the way we think or – more importantly – the very essence of what we feel as "beings". The notion of spirit – at least as potential explanation framework – must be embedded again in the science of the mind if we are to discover our true self. Taken together, alternative non-materialistic theories seem to present a formidable case for the scientific establishment to reckon with. But the materialistic bias in western science runs deep. And just how exactly it will be overturned remains anybody's guess. Regardless of the when this will happen, it seems that the thinking of modern science regarding the nature of the mind/body problem is a turning point we will eventually face. As futurist and popular science author Peter Russell suggests in 'From Science to God', "I now believe this is not so much a hard problem as an impossible problem – impossible, that is, within the current scientific worldview".

According to Popper, science progresses through the falsification of current theories and the formulation of new ones. And it takes only one counter-example, only one exception, to change the theory. You may have observed thousands of white swans and believe that you have a very solid case for the "All swans are white" theory, but it only takes one black swan to tear the theory down to the ground. In the case of mind research, it seems that many black swans are trying to fly in front of us, but we just won't let them.

4. OUR IDENTITY: CONSCIOUS BEINGS IN A MATERIAL COSMOS

Humans have been searching for the meaning of life and their identity in the universe since they started thinking. From the beginning of mankind, we were seeking our purpose in life. We were seeking our soul in the world and most of us believed that we had one. We could understand we were inherently different than a rock, but at some point, we attempted to analyze the nature of that difference. And that was when we forgot what we knew regarding our self.

Our journey in science has drifted us away from the wisdom we once had. Because we chose to transform wisdom into knowledge. And this sin, often mixed with arrogance, made us blind to what was once crystal clear to all of us: That we exist as persons. Every scientific advancement has drifted us away from the self-evident truth that "I am" – every experiment and every scientific announcement was based on the assumption that the universe is made only from matter and, thus, consciousness as a spiritual force has no place here. The fruit of knowledge has cast us away from the "paradise" of believing into our self; we now see us in the mirror only as an elaborate illusion. Modern advancements in science, which turned that knowledge into simple data, just made things worse. Nowadays scientists keep on analyzing data in the context of existing scientific models; thus, not allowing any room for doubt on whether the initial assumptions are still valid or not.

Nevertheless, all axioms and assumptions should someday be questioned. And the research on the matters of mind has generated so many questions that the time is right to raise the alarm that we could be building castles on sand. As quantum physics has showed, the observer is no longer a mindless being with no will, but the one who actually decides what will be seen. Consciousness has been transformed from a "result of matter" to a "source of reality". Even the once thought structural components of matter – particles – are now considered to be probability waves the existence of which depends on interaction with
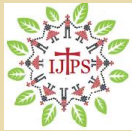
beings with consciousness. In this sense the atoms are more like "ideas" than spheres travelling into space. Neuroscience's attempts to solve the problem of consciousness could be – potentially – the reason why science will need to admit that it is reaching a dead-end. The secrets of the mind are not an inch closer to decrypting, despite all the phenomenal progress in data analysis concerning brain functions. Mind is not the slave of matter, but its master. And it seems that modern science will soon shift to a new paradigm and towards more holistic forms of thinking. As Chomsky postulated, our identity problem in the form of the Mind-Body controversy, can be solved in an innovative way if we consider modern scientific findings differently: There is no body! We are not specks of dust. We are important. We are the ones who give life to the universe itself. But if we want we can be unimportant. At the end, it is a matter of (conscious) choice.

"The culture of popular science is one of unidirectional skepticism… It is skeptical of any idea that spirituality corresponds to anything outside ourselves, but surprisingly gullible about any reductionist explanation of it."[6]

CONCLUSION

Humans have for a long time postulated on the great questions of "Who am I". And even though initially the existence of consciousness as spiritual force was common knowledge, as centuries passed humans destroyed that notion on the basis of nihilistic assumptions. Now science stands at a turning point, where our inability to account for consciousness seems to be the trigger that will, in time, push western science into what the American philosopher Thomas Kuhn called a "paradigm shift". Science's failure to solve the mind-body problem could ultimately be materialism's undoing. True scientists should be open to different interpretations and current experimental data strongly indicate that there is more than meets the eye in the world. The notion of 'spirit', initially discarded by modern science as unscientific, makes its way back, although not in the near future. It is difficult to discard assumptions which hold for thousands of years, especially when these assumptions are the basis of all current research community activities. Despite all that, at the end humans will remember who they are and regain their identity, coming in harmony with the reality of being conscious. Because no matter how many things neuroscience will discover for the functions of the brain, a different reality follows us every day and every passing minute: It is not my brain which wrote this article. It is me.

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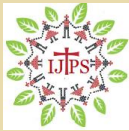
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CONTEMPORARY BIOETHICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE FAMILY

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ABSTRACT
This article presents the problem of the family from the Contemporary bioethical perspectives. The family represents the optimal environment in which man can fulfil himself, the natural path of human becoming. But the familial itinerary is subjected to numerous challenges and temptations, because the contemporary social context is one that minimizes the religious values and choices. Family represents a value and an institution that is necessary to our world and that cannot be replaced by anything else, and from our perspective the most viable familial reality is the traditional one.
Keywords: bioethics; family; abortion; contraception; Church; adultery;

INTRODUCTION

Without God, man seems to have become free, but he is rather free of life, or better said free in death, for he gained the liberty of the desert, arid and senseless (a fact that may be also observed in the progress of the *civilization of death*, so intensely preached today).

We understand why the world is diagnosed as suffering of lack of spirituality, the hardest and most spread suffering. All there is needed is Jezechiel's vision to come to life and the Spirit, who blows wherever He wishes, would pass again over the great field of the world's words. We will never be able to say how much God is Another, completely other. The danger of the projections is always present for us; to imagine a God who is far away from us, from our experiences and we already have created an idol of our minds. For these words, *The One Who is completely Another* make of our expectation an incomprehensible alterity, with cannot be measured. We must stress that we are not dealing with the rich and benefic recognition of alterity to which philosophers and psychologists recognize its role in interhuman relations, in love and friendship. It is an alterity for which we cannot have a common measure.

Which significance does it have the relationship with this Other? If he is Other, can he be meat? Can he be close to us? Close to our aspirations? How does He manifest and works in our lives and that of the world? Can He say something about our lives, about morality and family? We, Christians, believe that yes, God rations our life, He is the Spring and Master of life, while our moral decisions affect our life and those around us.

Central institution for the Judeo-Christian space, family represents one of the most respectable institutions of the contemporary Euro-Atlantic space, because it is the traditional bearer of the fundamental values within this geographic and religious space, but also because

it concentrates a special vision about world and life[1]. Considered pillar and foundation of society and personal development, the most important social construction, icon of Church, „fundamental social human community"[2], family is truly the main source of stability and morality in every human community, basing itself on the biblical perspective on world and life and having in its center the idea of communion, subsidiarity, solidarity, collaboration and love. In postmodernity, family has suffered numerous changes and it still suffers the ideological attack of many groups, especially of secular-atheistic and anti-Christian nature. If for a Christian family is a bastion of Christian principles, for a secular-atheist it represents a bastion of an ancient vision of life, but the present study does not, nevertheless, consider an analyze of the family from the perspective of its interaction with postmodernity, but from ideological perspective, or from the ideas confrontation between the two visions.

Although we clearly position ourselves on the traditional family's side, we respectfully consider any other perspective on family, even if we don't share those ideas, because of the fact that the freedom of thought is the greatest gift that our Creator has offered us, and the human being was endowed with the ability to choose and to discern as one of the greatest godly gifts. Outside a strong, healthy family we cannot conceive the human community, because the social relations, the fundamental ethical principles and the basic human values are being taught and exercised correctly and thoroughly only within the familial environment.

Family is, therefore, a source of morality for the entire society, a model of human relations and center of strength and stability. Without family there can be no human community or society and history demonstrates us that no human society ever existed without family at its foundation. Further on we will analyze, from the Christian bioethics perspective, from eastern orthodox perspective, some urgent and very important issues for the morality of today's man.

1. FAMILY'S SPIRITUAL AND BODILY FRUITFULNESS

One of the most important issues regarding the family, projection of the Holy Trinity within the human society[3] and the basic cell of the human society[4] is its fertility. Here we may ask several questions. Is a family without children complete, or not? The problem must be considered from biblical perspective: children are a gift and a blessing from God. In the Judaic and Judeo-Christian antiquity, the absence of children was the sign of a divine punishment, which was the lack of immediate familial fulfillment. We have the example of Zachary and Elisabeth who, until the birth of John, the future Saint, Baptizer and advent prophet, have suffered the vituperation from the part of their community.

But if we are to deepen the essence of this issue, is the purpose of the family the birth of children only?

If we were honest we should see that children are indeed a great gift and a blessing for any family, but there are also cases when for exclusively medical reasons – although in

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[1] Chipea F., *Familia contemporană – tendinţe globale şi configuraţii locale*, Bucharest, Expert, 2011
[2] Teoctist, Patriarch, "Mesaj la deschiderea Congresului Internaţional «Familia şi Viaţa la începutul unui nou mileniu creştin»", in *Actele Congresului Internaţional „Familia şi Viaţa la începutul unui nou mileniu creştin,* Bucharest, EIBMBOR, 2001; Ciubotea, IPS Daniel, "Familia creştină-Biserica de acasă", in Familia creştină azi, Iaşi, Trinitas, 1995; Mihaita, IPS Nifon, *Misiologie creştină*, Bucharest, Asa, 2005
[3] Popescu D., "Famila în cultura secularizată", in *Actele Congresului Internaţional „Familia şi Viaţa la începutul unui nou mileniu creştin*", Bucharest, EIBMBOR, 2001
[4] Gherghel P., *Familia creştină şi căsătoria*. In *DT*; 8/2001

this point we might juggle with the terms, because in the eastern tradition there is also the idea that the impossibility of having children is caused by a sin – a family cannot have descendants. It is nevertheless a family, although the immediate temptation is to consider it unfulfilled. Still, we shouldn't regard things through these lenses.

The family's main purpose is the manifestation of love between the two husbands, man and woman, the mutual relieving, the cooperation between them, the spiritual development of the two and the increasing communion, the personal becoming, because the main eschatological purpose of each one is redemption. Thus, each of the two husbands becomes a redemption ladder for the other. The main purpose is, therefore, a deepening of the communion, a mutual spiritual evolution, a fact which doesn't exclude fertility, viewed from spiritual perspective[5]. Family is based on love as purpose and main objective, because God who is Trinity of Persons and One in Being, is a model of perfection, of familial love, He "*institutes existence and life as an event of love and personal communion*"[6]. Same as the Trinity's persons are connected to one another by a perfect love (God, in His essence, is love!) discovering one another and being oriented towards one another.

In this way, although they cannot have any descendants, the two may fathom the relation of communion between them and support their spiritual development, which is the most important fact. At this level, from this perspective, we notice that we may speak of an extremely important spiritual and cultural paternity or maternity, because the godly demand is "be fruitful and increase in number", not only "increase in number", and this increase means spiritual and cultural fathoming (Genesis 1, 26). Human kind has known many geniuses, either they were unmarried, either married men with no children, which doesn't mean that they were less important for the history of humanity. Considering the couples who wish, but cannot have children, regarding from bioethical perspective we are dealing with the technical medical issue about the possibility of making children. Here we should discuss the practice of artificial insemination, or in vitro. The problem is simple. In order to have higher chances of success, several fecundated ovules are implanted in the female's uterus, but the problem appears when most of them die or appears the possibility of multiple carriages and the parents chose to allow the evolution of only one of them.

From moral point of view, we have the following problem: is it correct to manipulate life in such a manner? To choose which embryo to live and which one to die? Aren't we taking the Creator's place? Of course, we are responsible with protecting life and not allowing death to make us its instruments. It is moral to do everything it takes to have offspring, but without affecting the life which manifests itself and without putting an end to the right to life of any other potential embryo[7]. Here it must be stressed that any practice which leads to the destruction of life, of a future embryo with potentiality of life is completely immoral and a faithful man should regard the problem in this manner. Then, if this is the only medical solution, we must ask ourselves whether adopting a child isn't a more natural act than pushing the limits of human nature and destroying life and the potentiality of life.

We are also dealing with the problem of "substitute mothers" – if in a couple the woman cannot have children, from medical causes, then either on artificial or natural ways, the husband can fecundate a woman who is willing to carry the child of that couple. In this situation, the problem is immoral from the very beginning.

[5] Baconski Theodor, *Iacob şi îngerul*. Bucharest: Humanitas; 1997
[6] Yannaras Christos, *Libertatea Moralei*. Bucharest: Anastasia; 2002
[7] Evdochimov P., *Taina iubirii*, Bucharest, Christiana, 1994

Either we are referring to the procreation act outside marriage, either we are talking about the fact that the artificially fecundated ovule of a couple is implanted to a substitute mother, it is immoral, because the child creates a special bond with the mother and a mother cannot be only a carrier, being actually an intromission of a foreign person within the couple, which is a form of adultery, be it partial or virtual, which creates a serious moral problem[8].

2. THE ETHICS OF FAMILY'S FERTILITY

Another issue that might appear in connection with the family, „basic cell at the foundation of the social organism" and terrestrial image of Trinity[9], is about the medical means that stimulate fertility. These may morally be used, if they do not affect the corporal or spiritual health of the person who uses them. The condition is thus not to affect the user's health[10].

Nowadays, there is also the challenge of experiencing new fertilization treatments which, from moral perspective, raise the same problem, that of affecting the health of the person who uses these medical or medicamentary practices. Thus, if these experiments does not affect, limit or deform life and human health, then they are entirely moral and good to use. Corelative to this problem it is also the use of contraceptives or other contraceptive techniques which give their users the illusion of the liberty of deciding when to conceive a child. They forget that the latter is God's ineffable gift and he who cannot have children would better adopt. Then, the purpose of marriage is to fulfill love, the mutual aiding, walking on the path to fulfillment and the procreation of children, as main purpose, but not the only purpose[11].

Because they stop, effectively or virtually, the possibility to conceive and they serve the culture of death, of individuality and of pleasure, because it is medically proved that they affect the quality of human life and are foreign of promoting, respecting and supporting life, contraceptives are considered immoral. It is true that many people who believe themselves faithful accept them, considering that they have the right to conceive when they decide, which is why they use them deceiving their conscience that they avoid a greater evil, abortion or abandoning the newborn. But morally speaking the problem is wrongly approached, because the Christian leads himself according to the Holy Scripture, and in some confessional traditions the Holy Tradition has the same normative value. According to the latter, because they stand against life and our Creator, the contraceptive means raise serious moral problems.

The only accepted method for limiting the number of children is either restraining, either the so-called method of the biologic calendar, based on the increasing or the decreasing of the woman's basal temperature during the fertile periods or, inversely, the infertile ones.

Sexuality is not considered something evil and immoral and the birth of children is an auxiliary objective to marriage but, nevertheless, the morality of these connections is important, for life is bound to them, like the birth on new men in this world and the

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[8] Mihoc C., *Taina Căsătoriei şi familia creştină în învăţăturile Sfinţilor Părinţi din sec. al IV-lea*, Sibiu, Teofania; 2002

[9] Sârbu C., *Familia în cadrul învăţăturii creştine*. In Mitropolia Moldovei şi Sucevei; 3-4/1968; Mladin N., *Studii de Teologie Morală*. Sibiu: Ed. Tipografiei şi Arhiepiscopiei; 1969

[10] Remete G., "Familia şi planningul familial", in *Actele Congresului Internaţional "Familia şi Viaţa la începutul unui nou mileniu creştin"*, Bucharest: EIBMBOR; 2001

[11] Moldovan I., *Adevărul şi frumuseţea căsătoriei*. Alba Iulia; 1996

transmission of life. For this reason, sexuality, as key of life, and physical means of appearing into this world, has a predominant importance and cannot be simply exposed to pleasure, to human vices and caprices[12].

Family is the unique appropriate environment in which a child can come into this world, the only favorable environment for the fulfillment of love[13] being, from the perspective of Christian moral, the only optimal environment for the development, carrying and the appearance of human being.

In the family, both the father and the mother have an important role in the child's healthy and harmonious raising, each of them contributing to the genetical, spiritual and cultural dower of the newborn. Even emotionally, the appearance of a child outside the marriage or him being raised by only one parent represents an unhappy, abnormal and problematic situation for the child's harmonious, normal and natural development.

Choosing to have a descendant is a responsible decision and a manifestation of human liberty, but it doesn't represent everything because He Who is the Spring of life has, in this matter, the most important decision. Thus, sometimes there is at least apparently the possibility of giving birth to a child in the couple, but it fails to appear, other times the reproductive health of one of the members of the couple is irremediably affected, but the child nevertheless appears. It is also possible for a child to appear even if contraceptive methods are being used in the couple, without even being affected by them. This fact shows us that God is the One who has the final word concerning the appearing of life, and man is only the secondary operator of this life's *mise en scene*.

The conclusion is that everything that opposes to life, it limits and affects it cannot be moral and a good Christian will avoid this. The key or the deciphering code for these bioethics issues is this: man must stand in the service of life, of the culture of love, and never the other way around[14]. The responsibility to God's image which exists in each of us, to the magnificent gift of life consists in the respect towards life in all its stages and forms as a reflection of the Creator's will, the only one who is the Master of life and death, the absolute Lord of our existence[15].

3. DIVORCE – WOUND OF THE FAMILY AND VIOLATION OF GOD'S WILL

Another major issue in the contemporary bioethics is connected to divorce, namely the separation of the two husbands and the breaking of the marriage bond. Christianity respects almost completely the biblical principle that what God had bonded, man cannot break, which is why the indissolubility of marriage is regarded as godly will.

For the human frailness, there is nevertheless the possibility of remaking marriage and the allowance to let the man marry three times at the most in the orthodox Church, while the Catholic one doesn't accept divorce in any form[16]. Divorce is breaking the bond of love, or in other words its concrete aspect of alienation and separation. Even if in certain religious traditions man is allowed a second and a third marriage, this allowance is a sign of understanding the human flaws and not a habit or a state of normality. Separating yourself from the man you united with before God represents His dishonoring and a breaking of your

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[12] Rose S, *Un singur trup, amândoi o singură ființă*. Bucharest: Sofia; 1997
[13] Mayendorff J., *La marriage dans le perspective orthodoxe*. YMCA Press; 1986
[14] Breck J., *Darul sacru al vieții. Tratat de bioetică*. Cluj-Napoca: Patmos; 2003
[15] Ilioaie Ș., *Cultura vieții-aspecte morale în bioetică.* Cluj-Napoca: Renasterea; 2009
[16] Trifa G I., "Violența domestică și divorțul – provocări majore pentru Biserică și Școală", in *Educația din perspectiva valorilor*, VIIIth ed. Bucharest: Eikon

own promise of fidelity and the marital commitment. Marriage involves offering, abnegation, sacrifice, which is why divorce is unacceptable, for it means dishonoring the charisma, the refusal of surpassing the challenges together.

In the space of the Old Testament, divorce was allowed only for adultery, the only viable reason in Christianity also, perhaps because deceiving of one of the husbands breaks the marriage's indissolubility. In the Christian space, the approach is quite different, but most theologians speak about divorce as being an abnormality, a sin. This is why in the Orthodox space the second or the third marriage is considered only a special prayer and not a Sacrament and is granted only after a period of penitence.

Unfortunately, in the contemporary world divorce is considered a privilege of man, normality within the community, while the reasons for divorce have multiplied, in eager rivalry hilarious or superficial. Divorce is often caused by the fact that those who wish to marry do not put at the base of their relationship a common vision about world and life, but the pleasure, the interest or the ego. From Orthodox Christian perspective, divorce is unacceptable because it manifests superficiality towards the commitments taken before God and the significant half. The main cause of divorce is a superficial perspective about life and putting the relation of marriage on unsolid, emotional or superficial base. What should prevail in choosing a partner is, first of all, the existence of common moral and religious principles, of a compatible vision about the community and the will to remain faithful next to one another. The lack of a systematic and profound catechesis makes the majority of faithful Christians smaller and smaller. Those who consider themselves faithful, but break fundamental religious rules, are in a huge moral problem regarding their faith. Considering the Christian values as being negotiable and with no absolute normative value, even indirectly, for most Christians are unaware of that, lead to the marriage's failure in divorce[17]. Divorcing, breaking yourself from the unity of marriage is a wound on the Church's body, on the community in which the family lives, but also a missionary, educational and moral failure of the Church which was not able to intervene in this case in a beneficial and efficacious manner.

4. ABORTION-CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY AND ANTI-FAMILIAL AND IMMORAL ACT

Abortion represents a reality of the world we live in, either we are referring to faithful or non-believers. It represents, for the one who believes, an interruption of the life of a becoming human being. In their large majority, the Christian believers consider that human life appears as godly gift from the moment of the conception, which is why any intervention whatsoever upon the future grown human being is considered a crime.

Thus was considered abortion by Christians in all times and places, because putting a stop to a life is considered overtaking human prerogatives, because man has no right to take a life, either to a born or unborn human being. "Human being remains a human being no matter the dimensions it has and the environment where he lives. Wherever there is a stopping of this evolution, we are dealing with murder[18]. From bioethics perspective, the problem is this: can we really speak about human life from the conception? Some say that human is only the born being, others that the moment of life is not at all at the conception.

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[17] Balswich J O., Balswich J. K., *Familia, o perspectivă creştină asupra căminului contemporan*, Oradea: Casa Cărţii; 2009

[18] Pop I., *Contracepţia din perspectivă ortodoxă*, Babeş-Bolyai Publishging, 2007. URL: https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=254812

From theological perspective, we are guiding ourselves after the immutable godly Revelation, which asserts the existence of life, of person, from the moment of conception. From human perspective, we are guiding ourselves after the results obtained by science, which also shows that life appears from the moment of conception, as manifestation, as biofield and behavior inside the mother's body.

The human being is the most important for the Creator, for it is for man that God chose to come into this world, to become a man, which is why man has a huge value, greater than the one of the universe as a whole, for he is a reflection of God's image. This is why, no matter her age, the human being has the right to existence, which only God can give or take[19]. Unfortunately, we see that abortion appears especially at young people, who are not married and have occasional sexual relations, outside family, and abortion is a solution to the fact that in their life had appeared a child whom they do not want. The main cause is the precarious education, the lack of adequate catechesis and the lack of a religious sense of life.

It is immoral to take a life which you cannot give; it is immoral to interrupt a life only because you didn't know how to restrain yourself or to avoid having offspring you didn't want[20]. The Christian bioethics consider abortion as being the greatest moral evil for a mother, because abortion has poisonous psychical consequences, the feeling of guilt terrorizing the life of the one who chose this inhuman and immoral solution. Therefore abortion raises the problem of the right to decide whether to let continue or to stop the life of another, all the more so given the conditions that for a faithful man the human being is a person ever since the conception.

Why do we consider that life appears in the moment of conception? Because after that in unfolds naturally according to some observable stages that culminate at birth. We consider that, even if in is unborn yet, the human being has the right to life, because we are speaking about a human being and we do not have the right to alter the exclusive privilege of the Creator to give and take life to man. We must underline the fact that giving life or taking life to humans is an exclusive right of God. Man is called by God to life and without Him and His will there can be no life. Therefore, the right to existence is a godly gift which cannot be undertaken by man in any form whatsoever.

5. EXPERIMENTS ON MAN AND PALLIATIVE PRACTICES

The consent regarding human experiments or putting a stop to a life is, in Christian perspective, connected to family life as a whole. When man agrees to be a part of a medical experiment, he has to embrace as exegetical key not only his interest, but also his family's good. This is why he will accept to take this risk only after the family agrees, and the experiment's results may be useful to humanity itself. The members of the family must know that they are responsible for each other, that they have the duty to sustain and aid themselves, and any decision affecting in any measure their family they wish to take, has to be taken in consensus with the family and considering its interests. We have to exclude, here, the experiments based on financial gain or on other personal interests[21]. In the same optic we

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[19] Moldovan I., *Iubirea taina căsătoriei.Teologia iubirii*, Vol. I., Alba-Iulia: Tipografia Episcopiei Ortodoxe; 1996

[20] Ionascu, Pr. Juvenalie, *Teroriştii uterului. Terorism ştiinţific şi etica începuturilor vieţii, Eseu de bioetică a gestaţiei,* Bucharest, Anastasia, 2002

[21] Scripcaru G, Ciuca A, Scripcaru C, *Bioetica, stiintele vietii si drepturile omului*. Iaşi: Polirom; 1998

have to consider also the problematics of transplant, which is good and useful[22], but the decision to give an organ to the benefit of another must not affect the familial life, or to be a source of financial gain, but to serve the love for those close to us[23]. The Church blesses any medical practice which has the purpose of reducing sufferance in the world, therefore also the transplant made with respect for the receiver and the donner, live or dead.

A problem that is often encountered, collateral to our problematics, is the one in which members of the family are in a terminal stage of the illness, and the others have to make a decision about using medicines that ease suffering, but reduce life, or about other palliative medical practices[24]. A moral problem that appears here is this: is it moral to decide to shorten the life of a relative, by using medicines that diminish sufferance, or do we let her suffer, sometimes agonizingly, to the natural end of her life?[25]

The issue is not at all simple or easy, and the interpretation key is this: we have to protect human life, but not with the price of human suffering, unless the one who suffers haven't decided otherwise. This moral affirmation must consider not the easiness of life and the avoidance of suffering by all means, but to avoid the maximum of suffering, because otherwise it justifies even if indirectly euthanasia, and the Church follows the principle that life is God's gift and only He can take it away, while man has no right whatsoever to do this.

The family has no right of life and death upon any of its members, but it has the responsibility to protect the life of the members and, as much as possible, in extreme conditions, to avoid the maximum of pain and suffering[26].

Familial morality is a break against sin and a means to protect the sacramental fidelity of this holy sacrament. To live morally is not an option of will, but a necessity of life, in order to make life on earth bearable and to give man the chance to change and to evolve towards the discovery of his own existential purpose.

To live morally within family is to respect a way of life according to what the Creator wanted for us, because only in this way will we have the potential guarantee of fulfilling the purpose of our lives and avoiding failure.

CONCLUSIONS

As we have seen, the family represents the optimal environment in which man can fulfil himself, the natural path of human becoming. But the familial itinerary is subjected to numerous challenges and temptations, because the contemporary social context is one that minimizes the religious values and choices.

Family represents a value and an institution that is necessary to our world and that cannot be replaced by anything else, and from our perspective the most viable familial reality is the traditional one. Considering that God has created man after His image, it becomes obvious that fulfillment has to do with the man's need to follow a model, otherwise our life, in all her forms of daily, religious, professional, familiar existence, would suffer a huge vacuum if we would not have points of reference, in other words models of life with

[22] Andronikof M., "Un punct de vedere ortodox asupra transplanturilor de organe", in *Revista Teologică*, 8, 1/1998

[23] Sgreccia E, Tambone V., *Manual de Bioeticã*, Bucharest: Editura Arhiepiscopiei Romano-Catolice de Bucureşti; 2001

[24] Engelhardt Jr. H. Tristram, *Fundamentele bioeticii creştine. Perspectiva ortodoxă*, Sibiu: Deisis; 2005

[25] Stan G., *Teologie si Bioetica,* Alexandria: Biserica Ortodoxă; 2001

[26] Bogdan C., *Eutanasia şi suicidul asistat medical, din nou în actualitatea dezbaterii international*, in *Revista Română de Bioetică*, 1/2004
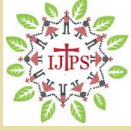
parable value, which to motivate our facts, thought and will, giving us the courage to engage ourselves in difficult moments and the strength to become better than we were when life asks it of us. The interpretation key of the moral actions, from Christian perspective, regarding human existence, is protecting and sustaining life in any situation but as God's exceptional, ineffable, full of love, gift. It is from this perspective that we must understand the problematics of families with or without children, of the transplant of organs, of experiments on humans, of abortion, divorce or the palliative practices we have talked about.

Whatever puts a stop to life, deforms the existential reality, affects or aggresses human life is abnormal and immoral and, therefore, is of no use to man. Christianity does not absolutize suffering, it does not believe in its necessity, but believes in its conscious and responsible bearing and its surpassing with the aid of the godly charisma.

Among all the challenges our world has to face, those that affect familial life can be considered aggressions against life, have an immoral character and are unprofitable for the life of the community. In conclusion, all that promotes life is moral, while promoting life represents a duty and an obligation for any human being that exists from the Creator's will.

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A NEW PRETEXT TO ATTACK CHURCH - ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION OF WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to answer in terms of teaching the Christian Orthodox faith of the often accusations of discrimination made by the Orthodox Church representatives of various media associations promoting feminist movement. In formulating the response were considered linguistic arguments, namely the original meaning of the term "discrimination" in Latin and its semantic evolution in different foreign languages, scriptural arguments, due to was shown who is the authority of the legislature in the Church and which is its legitimacy, which is the basis of the laws issued by it and their purpose in life of the Church and arguments of the folk tradition.

Keywords: discrimination; feminist movement; priesthood/ordination; religious tradition; apocryphal gospels;

INTRODUCTION

Under the pretext of the fight for human rights, nonconformists, misfits and rebels today, few in number, that's right, compared with those among whom they live, express noisy discontent with the rules of the members of which are claiming that their rights are violated, because they are restricted the freedom of speech and expression and they are therefore discriminated against others, say that part of the public and the media are very sensitive. Lately, under the influence of the more aggressive feminist movement, but also of some hidden interests of those who are "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Flp.3,18), such accusations have been made and the Orthodox Church in an attempt to discredit the doctrine of faith, traditions and customs which they defend it. This is the reason I considered trying to explain the natural subject of whether or not the teachings of any church or discriminatory practices in any aspect whatsoever.

To illustrate this issue it is necessary to know the exact meaning of the concepts to which we refer, as often happens, although using the same vocabulary, not to speak the same "language", giving the same word different meanings, which is why we fail to make ourselves understood, communication being thus faulty.

Etymologically, the word ***discriminate, discrimination*** comes from Latin. The verb *discrimino, -āre* means *to distinguish, to separate*, and the feminine noun *discriminatio, -onis* is translated *separately* and the masculine *discriminator, -oris* designates *the one who makes the difference*[1].

In terms of the two meanings, to distinguish and to separate each human person, due to its rational and free will endowed by God, having a choice between at least two options,

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[1] *Latin – Romanian Dictionary*, ed.G.Guțu, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, p. 355

commits a series of normal discriminatory acts, and to distinguish between good and evil, virtue and sin, between the good and the wicked, between the righteous and the unrighteous or to separate the peaceful from the most violent, the most healthy one from that who has a contagious disease, and examples such can continue.

In terms of everyday speech, the terms we refer to have acquired another meaning than the one made in Latin. Thus, the English verb *discrimination*, besides the *meaning to recognize a distinction between persons or things*, means *treating a person or group worse / better than others* and the noun *discrimination* designates inter alia *the different treatment usually bad, of a person or group over others*[2].

In Romanian the verb *to discriminate* has the meaning *to separate, distinguish, discriminate* and the noun *discrimination* is defined as *the difference*, but as *a policy by which a state or a group of citizens of a state are deprived of certain rights based on unfounded grounds*[3].

From the explanations provided by O.D.C.E. and D.E.X. actual language you notice a new meaning, the definition of the two terms, referring to a person, a group or class of persons subjected to bad treatment[4] compared to others. A more complete explanation of DEX discusses three very important elements in the correct understanding of the negative sense of the term discrimination, namely *politics, rights* and *unfounded reasons*. Having regard to all these considerations it results that in a negative sense discrimination is the worse and worse treatment that confronts a person, a group or class of persons in comparison with other community members, violation or arbitrary refusal, for unfounded reasons, of recognized rights of others, due to the orientation or attitude of an institution, a part or the community as a whole, racial, national, ethnic, social, cultural, religious, age, sex, etc.

Therefore, when someone accuses that he/she has been discriminated by violation or denying the exercise of certain rights, there should be considered whether the rights relied on them and were recognized by the legislature, the authority legally empowered to recognize or grant rights at the expense of community members or a person. Consideration should be also given to the legitimacy of legal and / or moral legislative authority to give someone, person, group, class or community as a whole, duties, competence, the basis on which the rights and purpose are recognised.

These elements, the existence or not of the rights, the authority that may accept or not those rights, the legitimacy and its jurisdiction, the basis on which or not the rights and the purpose are recognized, all these must be taken into account when making the Church accused of discrimination.

1. THE LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH AND ITS LEGITIMACY

From the outset it should be pointed and emphasized, the fundamental fact that, unlike the institutions that are founded and operate through human laws, being therefore likely to be unfair and discriminatory towards certain groups or categories of persons, the Church is a divine-human institution, being founded by Jesus Christ through His sacrifice on the Cross, He Himself being the head of the Church – *"Christ is head of the Church"*

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[2] *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (O. D. C. E.), fifth edition, New International Students'Edition, Oxford University Press, 1995, p.330-331

[3] *The explanatory dictionary of the Romanian language* (D.E.X.), 2nd edition, Publisher Universe Enciclopedic, Bucharest, 1998, p.307

[4] From O.D.C.E. results that discrimination can have a positive character, by treating "better" preferentially some than others

(Ef.5,23)[5]. Therefore, the supreme legislative authority in the Church is God the incarnate Son, Jesus Christ and His authority and legitimacy can be challenged only by the lawless, the enemies of the Cross, and then the discussion is pointless. The Head of the Church is without sin – *"Who of you proves Me of sin?"*(In.8,46)[6]- then *"righteous statutes of the Lord"* (Ps.18,8) and *"trustworthy are all His commandments, reinforced forever, made in truth and justice"*(Ps.110,7-8). It's obviously the law of the New Testament expressed in the Gospel in the nine beatitudes, the commandments and the evangelical counsels by which the Saviour "fulfilled" the law of the Old Testament – *"I have not come to destroy, but to fulfil"* (Mt. 5.17). Sending the Apostles to preach the Gospel, together with the grace of the Holy Spirit (Mt.28,18-20), the Saviour invested with the authority and legitimacy to lead the Church and therefore to adopt and establish, according to the evangelical law, rules by which to govern the Church and through it to meet both the domestic needs and the challenges coming from outside. By sharing the grace of the Holy Spirit to the bishops and priests in the sacrament of ordination, the Holy Apostles sent, in their turn, the authority and legitimacy to these – *"take heed to yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God"*(FA20, 28) - and, through them, the Church gathered in ecumenical councils or local.

Outside councils, by virtue of its faithful universal priesthood (1 Ptr.2, 9; 1 In.2, 20,27), the Church expresses its authority, as pleromas of his spiritual children, and the customs and traditions related to religious life or arising therefrom, to the extent that they are, in turn, in conformity with the Gospel and Church teaching law.

2. BASIS OF LAW AND ITS PURPOSE

The basis on which Jesus Christ founded the Church through the sacrifice of the Cross and gave people the law of the New Testament is the love for *"God is love"* (1 Jn. 4,16). God in His love includes all people without discrimination –*"He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and makes it rain on the just and on the unjust"*(Mt.5,45) - and us commanded to love our fellow beings without discrimination all (Lc.10,29-37), including the enemy - *"love your enemies..."*(Mt.5,44).

On the basis of God's love commandment – "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God ... is the great and first commandment it*"(Mt.22,37) embodied in the love of neighbour - *"Love your neighbour as yourself"*(Mt.22 39) and *"who loves God should love his neighbour"*(1 Jn. 4,20-21) - expressed the Church throughout the ages, and has the authority to adopt rules by which to establish and to guide the conduct of all aspects of church life. And as the law of love is not discriminatory (Mt. 5,45), or other rules of church life are not or might not be so to anyone, since all those spring from love. As to the purpose for which Jesus Christ instituted the new law of the Gospel and which the Church aims for each of his spiritual children, it is their sanctification in this life (In.17,17; 19) and the acquisition of eternal life (Mt.18,11). From the brief exposure of the above it is clear that the Church cannot be accused of discrimination, because where Christ is *"there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all"* (Col. 3,11). If there are still some who bring it such accusations, they are guilty of ignorance of church life and rules on which it is based or, what is more serious, bad faith and malice.

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[5] See also Mt.28, 18, 1 Co.15, 27, Ef.1, 22; 4, 15, Col.1, 18; 2, 10. Biblical texts are quoted from the Holy Bible, the Holy Synod jubilee edition (Bartolomeu Anania), Bucharest, 2001
[6] See also 2 Co.5, 21

3. THE FEMINISM OR THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL RIGHTS OF MEN AND WOMEN, THE MAIN SOURCE OF GENERATING ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE CHURCH DISCRIMINATION

Specifically speaking, the accusations of discrimination to the Orthodox Church come overwhelmingly from the feminist movement or supporters and sympathizers of this movement and refers to the situation of women in the Church in relation to men, incriminating, specifically, non-acceptance to the priestly ministry, the primacy of men over women in the Church, as well as some teachings or traditions that seem to discriminate against women. Those who provide such excuses to the Orthodox Church should be aware that in reality only Church really does not discriminate against women to men. Unlike any other human institution that can recognize the equal rights of the sexes, but cannot guarantee, for various reasons, equal opportunities in exercising those rights and the achievement of the aim pursued by them, the Church guaranteeing equal opportunities of women and men in achieving the ultimate goal which, as we have shown, it is salvation. Jesus Christ shares the grace of the Holy Spirit as gift in the Church through the sacraments and other sanctifying works in women and men equally and without discrimination. And there is no discrimination as regards the obligations men and women have in the Church. Proof of this situation are the Church sinaxars where can be found the saints and venerated as such, equally martyr men and martyr women, saints and pious.

As regards the accession of women to the stage of priestly ministry in the Church, this issue was not raised in the first nineteen centuries of existence of the Church, although in the first centuries, on the one hand, coming overwhelmingly from among the pagans, some Christians might raise the issue, citing the model of pagan cults where there were priestesses and, on the other hand, in the church there was a bunch of deaconesses[7] who were ordained[8] and vowed chastity, but whose ministry was strictly social in nature. Being so, from the beginning, understood and widely accepted by all Christians that the priestly ministry is reserved exclusively for party men, the Church has not discussed this issue in any council, so it was not specifically regulated in any namely canon. Under this situation of the Church there is both the Old Testament Law, which God ordained priesthood is reserved for men's Party (Is. XXVIII-XXIX), and especially the Church's tradition, based on the example of Jesus Christ who chose as His apostles, of those who have followed the course of his work of preaching the Gospel twelve men, among them being women too. After the ascension of Christ the Saviour, when it came to replacing Judas Iscariot in the apostolic ministry, it was considered choosing a man, not of any woman, even though they were present, along with the holy Apostles and other disciples, Mary and myrrh-bearing women. Sitting in the midst of all this, the number of which was *"like a hundred and twenty"*, St. Peter addressed only *"men brethren"*, saying that *"must have in these men, who gathered with us during the time Jesus was with us ... one of them to be a witness with us of His resurrection"*(F.A.1,21-22).

The descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost as tongues of fire that only face the Apostles (F.A. 2), who were thus clothed with power from up high and so consecrated as priests of the new law of Jesus Christ, confirms that the sacramental ministry, priesthood has been entrusted only to the male. Following the example of their Lord, the Holy Apostles chose and ordained as bishops and priests of the communities they have established, only men (F.A. 20,17; 28; 1Tim.3,2,12; 5,17).

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[7] Rom. 16, 1; can. 19, **sin. I ec.**; can.15, sin. the 4th ecumenical synod.
[8] Chyrotesia is an ierourgia, while ordination is the Sacrament

Aware that in the New Testament there is no argument, no text that can be cited in the accession of women to priestly ministry to give legitimacy to their struggle to achieve this goal, proponents of this case are trying to "rewrite" the Saviour's life and history of Early Church on the basis of so-called "new evidence" feeling, the mystery of the Church, which they produce in the apocryphal gospels and other writings apocryphal[9] nature. Based on these writings one is trying to posit the idea that among the apostles of Saviour there was a woman, Mary Magdalene, who had a special relationship with the Saviour and by virtue of that relationship would have enjoyed a privileged position before Him in relation to the other apostles. To argue its advocates call this idea including arguments that, given the time and used sources has not the slightest relevance to the matter in which all these are invoked. It is, on the one hand, the famous painting of *The Last Supper* by Leonardo Da Vinci in which, according to them, on the right of Saviour there was not the Apostle and Evangelist John but Mary Magdalene, concluding from this that, since she attended the dinner, Mary Magdalene was part of the Holy Apostles, having the same status as them, enjoying her gift and sacramental priesthood. On the other hand, in support of this theory there are put forward various contemporary writings, each more fanciful, lacking any scientific substrate, but claims to science, and who claim that revealing information known only original members of secret organizations whose roots go back in history to the time of Jesus.

Looked closely, both sources and quotes from the texts they are proving to be lacking in credibility and relevance. *Gospel of Philip* and the *Gospel of Mary*[10], to which reference Apocrypha those campaigning for women's ordination in the Church by virtue of sacramental priests alleged that as partaker and Mary Magdalene are unreliable because they are of Gnostic origin. In addition, even in these writings show that Mary Magdalene would be counted among the Apostles, one conclusion in this regard is forced. Apocryphal texts not only say that Mary Magdalene Saviour "*loved her more than all the disciples*"[11] or "*than all the women*"[12], and that the Holy Apostles Peter and Andrew doubted that the Saviour would have discovered her secret teachings, which he had shared with others[13]. Moreover, even in the Apocrypha blamed on her when she encourages the Apostles to go with courage to preach the Gospel, Mary Magdalene does not include herself among the Apostles, but says "*His grace will be with you forever and will protect you*"[14].

As for the interpretation of the painting of Da Vinci, it cannot be taken into account simply because it is in flagrant contradiction with what was documented in writing even the one who stood head on the breast of the Saviour to dinner, Apostle and Evangelist Joan (In.13,23; 21.20).

Beyond these arguments irrelevant and inconsistent theologically much more serious is, in terms of the fight to eliminate the alleged discrimination of women in the Church in relation to man and accepted the priestly ministry, the emergence in theology, a new directions, feminist theology, for which the traditional arguments in support of the Church in the Sacrament accepting the ordination of women have no value.

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[9] Non-authentic writings or whose authenticity is questionable, falsely attributed to authors whose authority is recognized that the Church does not recognize them and they are among the canonical religious books

[10] Published in *The Gnostic Gospels*, translation, introductory study and notes by Anton TOTH, Herald Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005

[11] *Gospel of Philip*, *vol.cit.*, p.167 și *Gospel of Mary*, *vol.cit.*, p.296

[12] *Gospel of Mary, vol.cit.*, p.291

[13] *Gospel of Mary, vol.cit.*, p.298

[14] *Gospel of Mary, vol.cit.*, p.291

For example, an article of Sister Nonna Verna Harrison, who has sought to present the objections and counter-arguments put forward by the feminist theology against the practice of accepting women in priestly liturgical service that divine authority, which underlies the argument of tradition, the strongest otherwise justifying the practice of the Church in this respect, to which I referred above and that will not be enough. "Proponents say that ordaining women is a serious injustice ... that they be excluded just because of their sex, from a form of service which can achieve. If only motivation as divine authority, it would make God not only arbitrary and unfair. (...) So if God commanded indeed, He must have another reason, of such importance to justify that exclusion otherwise unfair. It cannot be based solely on divine authority itself "[15].

Searching for "a motivation deeper spiritually and theologically"[16] beyond the argument of divine authority means, on the one hand, to question the wisdom of God and His righteousness, in flagrant contradiction with the revelation of Holy Scripture, according to which *"Truth is the beginning of thy words, and all the judgments of thy righteousness shall endure forever"*(Ps.118, 160) and *"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How are His ways of unexplored and His judgments unfathomable"*(Rm.11, 33), and on the other hand, we lose time in vain in theological disputes, *"For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?"*(Rm.11,34) *"As my counsels are not as your counsels, nor your ways my ways as well, says the Lord. Because how far is heaven from earth, in so far is My way from your ways and your thoughts from My mind"*(Is.55: 8-9). If divine authority is not sufficient, then any other argument is superfluous.

And yet, without seeking to answer these objections and rebuttal of feminist theology step by step, we will try very briefly to show that this theological approach starts from a false premise.

From the perspective of the human "nature" argument, the feminists strongly accuse that women are barred from ordination "just because of their sex"[17]. He started from the premise that sexuality is the criteria that guides the Church in the mystery man's acceptance and rejection of women's ordination to the holy sacrament, is a grave error. Equally counterproductive and wrong seems to me, by the way, and trying to discover the author's article cited "meaning the priest masculinity"[18] and argues it from the patristic theological perspective. As some arguments rose by some Orthodox theologians to justify the rejection of women from the priesthood, as the moral and spiritual inferiority of woman, her flowers or her universal subordination to man[19], they are completely unfounded and are offensive to women.

I think the priest masculinity and therefore sexuality are not the answer to this problem. Man and woman cannot be reduced to their sexuality or any common human nature, facts which we cannot ignore any longer, because the two are more than that. Through the act of creation God hypostasized human nature for the first time in the person of a man, Adam, and only after then of a woman, Eve, whom he had named *"Woman, because she was taken from her husband"*(Fc. 2.23). Although they share a common human nature, Adam and Eve, and therefore men and women are different not only sexually but psychosomatically too, without being inferior, and therefore subordinate to one another in

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[15] Nonna Verna HARRISON, *Orthodox arguments against ordaining women,* translated by Iuliu Blaga Adrian in *Theological Studies,* Series III, third year, No.2, 2007, p.123
[16] N.V. HARRISON, *Orthodox arguments…*, p.123
[17] N.V. HARRISON, *Orthodox arguments…*, p.123
[18] N.V. HARRISON, *Orthodox arguments …*, p.124-125, 137-140
[19] N.V. HARRISON, *Orthodox arguments …*, p.125,127

any respect whatsoever. Beyond the universality of human nature that unites all people ontologically, but also the uniqueness of every human being partly, man and woman are different due to different specific gifts that God has endowed them in creation.

The response should be sought, perhaps in domestic life and relations between persons of the Holy Trinity, Church paradigm for life. Because *"God is Spirit"*(Jn. 4,24), "the eternal existence of divine hypostases such limitations and divisions based on sex"[20] which are totally inappropriate and leads to heresy, are absent[21], as very correctly states the author quoted article. And yet, God is revealed as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and the name by which we call the three Persons of the Trinity are very important in order to understand the internal relationships between them. St. Gregory Palamas wrote that the name of "Father" that we call the One without Beginning implies logically to "give birth" and the "Son" given to the Born, "that the Son is the Son of the Father and brings to mind the Father" as the name "Father immediately brings to mind the name of the Son"[22]. The two names, Father and Son, which involves "giving birth", although seem to appoint two persons of the male gender, transcend the idea of sexuality and define the relationship of fatherhood - lineage exists in the Trinity between One without Beginning and One Born.

This lineage paternity - relationship between Father and Son in eternity plan is fully the paradigm for another birth for eternity, *"not from blood, nor from bodily will, nor from the will of man, but from God"*(Jn. 1:13), *"from up"*, *"from water and Spirit"*(Jn. 3, 3.6) is, to those who believe and confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God incarnate, and that celebrates the sacramental priesthood. The receiving ordination as priest becomes the spiritual father of all his spiritual children, whom born and reborn with his grace through the Holy Spirit to eternal life and the other sacraments of the Church's sanctifying work.

The spiritual birth through the sacramental priesthood being entrusted exclusively to man means that God, who is neither arbitrary nor unfair in judgment and in His judgments, has entrusted women another but only of them, the motherhood, birth of sons flesh. She does really fulfil herself only in motherhood, and when she conceives a new human creation she is working together with the Holy Spirit, springing life into her womb.

Unfortunately, just under the influence of the feminist movement, claiming women's right to accede to stage of the sacramental priesthood in the Church, women are more prone to not make working the sacred gift that she was endowed by God and which defines par excellence that of childbirth -*"and Adam called his name of his wife Eve, because she is the mother of all living"* (Gen. 3,20).

The sacramental priesthood being, therefore, entrusted to men and this consisting not only in function of sanctifying, but in the teaching and the ruling image of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, the woman is not allowed either to teach or to lead others in the Church. St. Paul is very emphatic in this regard, teaching that *"in all churches of the saints, women should remain silent during the church meetings; Because they are not permitted to speak"*(1 Co.14,34) and *"not to teach another"*(1 Tim.2,12), but *"the woman should listen quietly with all subjection"*(1 Tim.2,11). This teaching of the Apostle Paul, justified both by the Old Testament Law, and the fact that *"Adam was first created, then Eve; and Adam was*

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[20] N.V. HARRISON, *Orthodox arguments ...*, p.128
[21] N.V. HARRISON, *Argumente ortodoxe...*, p.129
[22] St Gregory PALAMAS, *Words evidence. First word that the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the Son too, but only from the Father,* in *Complete works,* vol.I, translation, notes, introductory study by Cristian Chivu, Patristic Publishing House, București, 2005, p.155

not deceived; but the woman being deceived didn't listen to the commandment"(1 Tim.2,13-14), is counted among the other *"commandments of the Lord"*, whose purpose is keeping the laws of churches and in the Church, *"for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace"*(1 Co.14,33). Instead, as noted by Nonna Harrison, "there is no reason why women cannot exercise other ministries such as the work of charitable or missionary, teaching and counselling, and care for the sick, the poor and elderly"[23], on which the Church calls for them, and which they all fulfil with faith and love.

From the above it cannot be concluded that the Church would somehow discriminate the woman in relation to man. On the contrary. By His incarnation from the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ restored the dignity of woman before the fall and from the outset members of the early Christian communities were aware of this new state of affairs. St. Paul reminds the women in his letters as very important helpers in preaching the Gospel, and in the Epistle to the Ephesians is quite clearly stated that the ratio of men and women in the family and in the church, should be modelled as the relationship between Christ and the Church (Ef.5 22-33). If the men's side is given precedence at different liturgical moments in the Church, this tradition subsumes the teaching of the Apostle Paul who stated about keeping ordinance in the Church, and this preference is one of honour. It stems from the love and respect shown by the woman for the man in the family, the model Church-Christ being extended to the Church, and not otherwise.

In the Orthodox Church, the faithful guardian of the teachings of Jesus Christ and his holy Apostles, there is, apart from the sacramental priesthood, a number of traditions related to different holidays or times of serious liturgical moments that can be attended only by men, and not by women. Some of these traditions, especially the most popular among the Christians, who are accompanying or following some liturgical celebrations and moments involving many believers, were the occasion to bring accusations that the Church discriminates against women. It is the case of tradition of fishing the Holy Cross when a bishop or priest throws it into the water on the feast of Theophany, after the consecration of high water, to which only men can participate[24]. Although this rule has not been reinforced by the Church in any written canon, it is part of the tradition of church life, gaining the character of an unwritten law, which means that it is in general use of the whole Orthodox Church, that it was tacitly accepted by Church, that it was also accepted voluntarily by the spiritual children of the Church and it has been in practice for a period of great time[25].

About how important it is tradition for people, especially when linked to a religious event, folklore testifies Romanian people. There are many popular religious customs and traditions, some of pagan origin inherited and perpetuated until today, where, after the case, women are not accepted, such as Căluşarii, or the men as in the case of dancing girls from Căpâlna, to name but two examples. There are also a number of traditions and customs of different important liturgical life of the Christian, of bathing the baby by godmother after he was baptized, dressing and arranging the bride before the wedding and undressing her after the wedding at which only women may participate, according to the tradition men being forbidden without them somehow feeling discriminated against, and the examples could continue. And no doubt, such examples do exist in the traditions and customs of all nations,

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[23] N.V. HARRISON, *Orthodox arguments…*, p.124

[24] One such case happened at the Feast of Theophany in Braila in 2007

[25] *Moral Orthodox Theology*, mitropolit dr. Nicolae MLADIN, diac. prof. dr. Orest BUCEVSCHI, prof. dr. Constantin PAVEL, diac. prof. dr. Ioan ZĂGREAN, vol.1, Alba Iulia, Reunification Publishing House, 2003, p.198-199
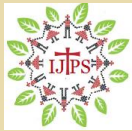
Christian or not, being accepted, respected and passed on, to the new generations by those they encounter, these representing an overwhelming majority in their communities.

4. RIGHTS DISCRIMINATED BY THE WOMAN WHO FIGHTS HER ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION BY THE CHURCH

Struggling to remove some alleged discriminations and to acquire rights which God and the Church have never put about her, the modern feminist woman, repeats somehow, at another level, the fault of the first woman, therefore that of being deceived that it would be *"equal to God"*(Fc.3,5) and that she can be equal to man that can be in his place, the place of the forbidden fruit being taken by prohibited gift of priesthood. While squandering her energies to prove that she can be like the man, the woman spoils the gift of childbirth, or simply refuses the result of this gift, thus discriminating the sacred right and duty to serve God in maternity, but divine gift entrusted exclusively to her. Motherhood with all that this implies, all feelings and emotional states manifested in the love of the baby and care for his life, to whose defence the true mother sacrifices her own life, reason to assert that "motherhood is a particular form of female kenosis"[26]. This is what differs fundamentally from psychosomatic level the man from woman. Only motherhood, through which the woman herself is fulfilled and is saved - *"but she shall be saved through child birth, if she simply stays in faith, love and holiness"*(I Tim.2,15) - proves that opinion according to which "a global designation of tasks as masculine and others as feminine has (...) strong social implications and (...) devastating" that "would affect all women and men"[27] is wrong at least in part, the ministries that result from maternity being more appropriate to woman's sensibility. Some of these rights / duties arising from maternity are beautifully captured by the author of the poem "*Women's rights*":

"The right to serve and to love,
The right, to be merciful,
The right, to gently care for little children,
To grow them up, teach, reprimand, and counsel,
The right when everyone sleeps to watch them all,
The right the dark in light to turn,
With gentle dignity to crown,
The another's burden and hardships to bear,
The right when hard times overflow,
The strong faith to support
The right to be a full woman,
True, pious and pure kindness:
That's the best right of a woman."[28]

These lyrics are, I believe, the best and most beautiful response that can and should give the Church to the modern feminist Christian woman, these reminding her rights and gifts that have been given and the services that she has been called by God and the Church, particularly important for the service of the Church and society, which honour and ennobles her.

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[26] Paul EVDOKIMOV, *The mystery of love. The holiness of married life in the light of Orthodox tradition,* translated by Gabriela Moldoveanu, verifying and improving the translation by pr.lect. univ. dr. Vasile Răducă, București, 1994, p.158
[27] N.V. HARRISON, *Orthodox arguments…*, p.127
[28] Pr. Gheorghe PERVA, *The Woman in light of Christianity*, Arad, 1940, p.126

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[2] *Latin – Romanian Dictionary* [Dicţionar Latin - Român], ed.G.Guţu, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983

[3] *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, fifth edition, New International Students'Edition, Oxford University Press, 1995

[4] *The explanatory dictionary of the Romanian language* [Dicţionarul Explicativ al Limbii Române], 2nd edition, Publisher Universe Enciclopedic, Bucharest, 1998

[5] *The Gnostic Gospels* [Evanghelii gnostice], translation, introductory study and notes by Anton TOTH, Herald Publishing House, Bucharest, 2005

[6] Nonna Verna HARRISON, *Orthodox arguments against ordaining women* [Argumente ortodoxe împotriva hirotonirii femeilor], translated by Iuliu Blaga Adrian in *Theological Studies* [Studii Teologice] Series III, third year, No.2, 2007,

[7] Sf.Grigorie PALAMA, *Words evidence. First word that the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the Son too, but only from the Father* [Cuvintele doveditoare. Cuvântul întâi că Duhul Sfânt nu purcede şi de la Fiul, ci numai de la Tatăl], in *Complete works* [Opera completă], vol.I, translation, notes, introductory study by pr.Cristian Chivu, Patristic Publishing House, Bucureşti, 2005

[8] Pr.Gheorghe PERVA, *The Woman in light of Christianity* [Femeia în lumina creştinismului], Arad, 1940

NATIONAL UNITY AND UNITY OF FAITH IN THE SPEECHES OF PATRIARCH MIRON CRISTEA

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ABSTRACT

By remembering Patriarch Miron Cristea, we do not only recall a person, or a hierarch, but we actually evoke a lifetime of work and activity, abnegation and sacrifice, humbleness and spiritual elevation – a lifetime dedicated to calling, like an apostle, the whole Romanian Orthodox nation to follow his example. A distinguished scholar, keen on studying, endowed with great willpower and capacity for effort, an orator with a calling, loving our ancestral faith and language, an enlightened patriot, a fighter for justice and for national freedom: these are the main features that characterize his outstanding personality. As it is known, the name of the first Patriarch of Romania, Miron Cristea, is forever inscribed in the Golden Book containing the names of the great Romanian men who were part of the golden generation that forged the Great Union of 1 December 1918, at Alba Iulia. The historic events occurring in late 1918 found Miron Cristea at the bishopric see of Caransebeş, where he had been elected in 1909, but where he could be installed only in 1910, because the government of Budapest had delayed acknowledging the elections.

Keywords: Patriarch Miron Cristea; union; faith; identity;

PRELIMINARY FACTS

The Romanian Orthodox Church has had a major contribution to promoting national consciousness and fostering the shared sense of the Romanian identity and spiritual unity. This has always supported the Romanian people and fed its aspirations. The great historian Nicolae Iorga wrote:

> "Metropolitans, bishops, hegumens, and so often the humble monks or the lowly priests were the ones who equipped the people with virtually all its education; who offered the nation its literary language and its sacred literature, with an art in agreement with its tastes and needs; who supported the State without becoming subservient to it; who guided and led the nation along its earthly ways, however never losing sight of the heavens (…) From their ranks came scholars, calligraphers, wood carvers, silversmiths, state officials, fighters, martyrs and saints"[1].

Cultivating the sense of national and faith unity, the Romanian Orthodox Church contributed to paving the way for the great historic events, aimed to achieve the national union of Romanians: the Union of Principalities of 1859, the State Independence of Romania

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[1] Nicolae Iorga, *Istoriei Bisericii româneşti şi a vieţii religioase a românilor*, vol. I, ediţie revăzută şi adăugită, Ed. Ministeriului de Culte, Bucureşti, 1928, p. 4.

(1877-1878) and the Great Union of 1918 – a crucial event in the edification of the unitary national state of Romania.

The current year - 2018, marks the Centennial of the Union of Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania with the Kingdom of Romania, in the year 1918, in the aftermath of the First World War. By joining this world war (4/17 August 1916), Romania actually aimed to achieve the full union of the nation, and the establishment of the unitary national state.

This year, we commemorate the authors of the Great Union of 1918: in Bessarabia – Ion Inculeț, Pantelimon Erhan, Pantelimon Halippa, Ion Buzdugan and Ioan Pelivan, in Bukovina – Iancu Flondor, Sextil Pușcariu, Dionisie Bejan and Doru Popovici, in Transylvania – Vasile Goldiș, Ștefan Cicio-Pop, Alexandru Vaida-Voievod, Iuliu Maniu, Octavian Goga, Ion Flueraș and Vasile Lucaciu, to mention only a few of the most distinguished founders of the Great Union. We also highlight the contribution of the Romanian hierarchs, most notably **bishop Miron Cristea** of Caransebeș, the future Patriarch of Romania, as well as many Orthodox clergymen, to the Great Union of 1918[2].

By remembering Patriarch Miron Cristea, we do not only recall a person, or a hierarch, but we actually evoke a lifetime of work and activity, abnegation and sacrifice, humbleness and spiritual elevation – a lifetime dedicated to calling, like an apostle, the whole Romanian Orthodox nation to follow his example. A distinguished scholar, keen on studying, endowed with great willpower and capacity for effort, an orator with a calling, loving our ancestral faith and language, an enlightened patriot, a fighter for justice and for national freedom: these are the main features that characterize his outstanding personality. During his tenure was achieved the church unification in the newly united Romanian state, our Church was organized as a Patriarchate, and the *Statutes for the organization and functioning* of the Romanian Orthodox Church were voted in 1925. During his tenure was resumed the publication of the ,,Romanian Orthodox Church" Journal (1921), the Journal ,,Apostolul [Apostle]" was launched, the *Synodal Bible* of 1936 was translated and printed, as well as new editions of the *New Testament*. He supported the printing of theological books at the Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, established the Theological Seminary ,,Patriarch Miron" in Câmpulung-Muscel (1922) and the Academy of Religious Music in Bucharest (1927). The first to envisage a Cathedral of National Salvation was Patriarch Miron, one of the fiercest advocates of the Union. As early as 1920, during a festive session of the Holy Synod, the idea put forth by the Primate Metropolitan of Romania and even the name of Cathedral of National Salvation were accepted enthusiastically[3]. On becoming a patriarch in 1925, Miron Cristea began to concern himself with the construction, arguing that a Patriarchal Cathedral could no longer remain in a place of worship (beautiful as it might be) such as the metropolitan Cathedral on the Patriarchate Hill, erected in 1655 by Șerban Constantin Vodă[4].

Volumes of sermons. Fully aware of his mission and responsibility, he was a tireless preacher of the Gospel's words. His sermons were compiled in the following volumes: *Cuvântări și predici ale unui teolog, mai târziu cleric român în țară sub stăpânire*

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[2] †Daniel, Patriarhul Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, *Unitatea națională – un dar sfânt și o responsabilitate comună*, http://basilica.ro/unitatea-nationala-un-dar-sfant-si-o-responsabilitate-comuna-text-integral.

[3] Pr. asist. dr. Nicușor Beldiman, *Predica în Biserica Ortodoxă Română din Muntenia în secolul al XX-lea. Analiză și evaluare*, Editura Episcopiei Giurgiului, 2013, p. 48.

[4] Acad. Zoe Dumitrescu-Bușulenga, ,,Catedrala Mântuirii Neamului", in ,,B.O.R.", year CXXII (2004), no. 1-4, p. 84.

străină [*Speeches and sermons delivered by a theologian, later a Romanian clergyman in a country under foreign rule*][5], *Pastorale şi cuvântări ale unui episcop român în ţară sub stăpânire străină* [*Pastoral letters and speeches delivered by a Romanian bishop in a country under foreign rule*][6], *Trei ani de propovăduire. Pastorale şi cuvântări* [*Three years of preaching. Pastoral letters and speeches*][7], *Pastorale, predici şi cuvântări* [*Pastoral letters, sermons and speeches*] [8], *Pastoral letters, sermons and speeches* [9], *Pastoral letters, sermons and speeches*[10].

The volume *Cuvântări şi predici ale unui teolog, mai târziu cleric român în ţară sub stăpânire străină* [*Speeches and sermons delivered by a theologian, later a Romanian clergyman in a country under foreign rule*] [11], authored by the one who was to become the first patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, includes numerous addresses delivered on various occasions, as well as a number of sermons. The book cover informs us that they spanned 20 years of pastoral activity (1889-1909). The author confesses that these speeches render his accumulated pastoral experience, as well as his sustained efforts not only in the realm of church affairs, but also in the educational, cultural, economic, social, artistic realms, and most notably, his efforts to „awaken and cultivate the national sentiment of the Romanian people, to safeguard its existence"[12].

Themes and current ideas. In this anthology of sermons, Miron Cristea addresses a highly diverse and wide range of issues: *religion, Christianity, prayer*, *the role of school education in the life of a nation, the teachers' duties, the benefit of school examinations*, *labour and industriousness*, *excessively lavish funerals, the importance and significance of a cathedral, the importance of the church as a worship place and its role, family, the Lord's Resurrection*, *social and religious pratices,* and last but not least, the *sufferings of the Romanian people and its patriotism*. As it is known, the name of the first Patriarch of Romania, Miron Cristea, is forever inscribed in the Golden Book containing the names of the great Romanian men who were part of the golden generation that forged the Great Union of 1 December 1918, at Alba Iulia. The historic events occurring in late 1918 found Miron Cristea at the bishopric see of Caransebeş, where he had been elected in 1909, but where he could be installed only in 1910, because the government of Budapest had delayed acknowledging the elections[13]. However, a few years previously, in his pastoral letter for the Lord's Nativity of 1913, he had uttered prophetic words announcing the events of 1918: „*Rejoice! If not tomorrow, anyway very soon what is rightfully ours must be surrendered to us*!" On the eve of 1 December, Miron Cristea led thousands of the Banat Romanians to Alba Iulia – the city of our national aspirations, and the place that witnessed the great „miracle" willed by more than one hundred thousand Romanians, arriving from every part of Transylvania. Before them, the bishop of Caransebeş uttered a prayer which „*brought tears of joy to the eyes of all those present*". Having announced to the crowds the Decision of

[5] Vol. I, Bucharest, 1923.
[6] Vol. II, Bucharest, 1923.
[7] Vol. III, Bucharest, 1923.
[8] Vol. IV, Bucharest, 1938.
[9] Vol. V, Bucharest, 1938.
[10] Vol. VI, Bucharest, 1938.
[11] Tipografia Cărţilor Bisericeşti, Bucharest, 1928, 380 p.
[12] †Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări şi predici ale unui tânăr teolog mai târziu cleric român în ţară sub stăpânire streină 1889-1909*, Tipografia Cărţilor Bisericeşti, Bucharest, 1928, p. 381.
[13] Ilie Şandru, „Miron Cristea şi Marea Unire", în ziarul „Naţiunea", Serie nouă, Anul VIII, 13, 2013, p. 1.

Union between Transylvania and Romania, Miron Cristea delivered a fiery speech addressing the ,,*Great Romanian Nation*".

The speech of the bishop of Caransebeş evoked the troubled history of the Romanians in Transylvania, especially the ,,*enslavement of Romanians in Transylvania and Hungary, their bondage which lasted for a thousand years*"[14].

> "I would upset your souls too much, I would trouble and spoil the joy of this beautiful celebration, if I rendered a too detailed picture of our long-standing sufferings over these ten centuries"[15], because ,,blinded by the chimera of a Magyar national state, Hungarian politicians did not refrain from devising the most devilish ways and means, in order to destroy the Romanian nation and turn us Hungarian (…) The black count Julius Andrassy, whom the Hungarian republic intends to delegate for the peace negotiations, has declared in the Hungarian Parliament: ,,the issue of nationalities in Hungary is a matter of power, not justice or rights"! Especially their attitude towards us in the recent years, is unacceptable (…) Most painful was the oppression against our Romanian souls and the abuse against our schools which were closed down, for we have never forgotten for a moment the warning of our great Bărnuţiu in 1848: ,,The more Romanian pupils will learn in foreign schools, the more sons our nation shall"[16].

The great dream of national unity was achieved at long last, after centuries of sacrifice and much Romanian blood spilled in terrible battles. Because – as Miron Cristea said:

> "the ideal of any people inhabiting a compact territory, must be its national and political unity. We would be mere ignorants, deserving disdain and scorn, if in today's circumstances we pursued other goals. It is only through the union of all Romanians that the products and manifestations of our national genius will be able to emerge, and contribute to the progress of mankind through their specifically Romanian qualities" (…) Despite the strength of the Carpathians' wall, which has so far separated us from our brothers, here and now – in the footsteps of Michael the Brave – I can only say with the writer Rădulescu Niger: ,,Today's boundaries are transient and short-lived,/ and time disdains them;/ for it can see their future fate,/ to become open forever"[17].

> ,,The moment of opening them has arrived"! Miron Cristea exclaimed. ,,We cannot, and need not bring down the Carpathian Mountains, for they are and must remain the very core of the Romanian nation; but I feel that today, through our unanimous voice, we will open wide the Carpathians' gates, forever, so that the warmest Romanian life may flow freely…"[18].

Miron Cristea delivered a masterful speech, brief but substantial, to greet in the Gara de Nord (North Railway Station) in Bucharest, the delegation of Transylvanian Romanians (Vasile Goldiş, Al.Vaida-Voievod, Miron Cristea and Iuliu Hossu) bringing the Declaration of Union of Transylvania and Romania:

> ,,When we last met here – Miron Cristea said – no one of us dared to dream that your next visit to the capital of Romania would have the historic mission to join the entire Romanian territory: Transylvania, Banat, Crişana amd Maramureş, to the motherland – our cherished Romania!(…) We extend our deepest, eternal gratitude for everything you have done for us – now and during the past centuries, from voivode Stephen the Great (Bishopric of Vad), Radu IV the Great (Bishopric of Geoagiu), Michael the Brave (Bishopric of Alba Iulia) to Constantin Brâncoveanu and king Carol I. We thank the merciful God for allowing us, today's

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[14] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvinte despre Marea Unire*, Editura Basilica, Bucureşti, 2018, p. 24.
[15] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvinte despre Marea Unire*, p. 24
[16] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvinte despre Marea Unire*, p. 26.
[17] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvinte despre Marea Unire*, p. 30-31.
[18] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvinte despre Marea Unire*, p. 31.

generation, to live the greatest days in the entire span of the almost 2,000 years of our nation's life"[19].

Miron Cristea delivered his third address, on the same occasion, standing next to the statue of Michael the Brave, before an immense part of the Bucharest population:

,,On behalf of the National Assembly of Romanians in Transylvania, Banat, Crişana and Maramureş, we the four messengers have come before His Majesty the King to submit to him these Romanian lands. We have come to the heart and centre of Romania, to proclaim from here our great joy at having withstood a bondage that lasted for almost ten centuries"[20]. Miron Cristea made known to the crowd the Decision issued at Alba Iulia, on 1 December, namely ,,the definitive union of our entire ancestral land with the motherland, our beloved Romania (…)"[21].

,,We, the Romanians across the Carpathians, are coming to you, our brothers, with the warmest trust and brotherly love to join the august Romanian dynasty, with the firm belief that we will find in Your Majesty the best and most affectionate father, who – in the greatest but also the most difficult moments in the life of our nation, pursued the loftiest ideals of the entire Romanian people"[22].

In his address delivered in the Aula of the University of Bucharest on the first anniversary of the Great Union, the future patriarch stated:

,,Today, everyone's most patriotic duty is to close ranks and solidify the internal solidarity, for the respect we command among other nations depends on our ability to demonstrate our worth; our national dignity can be safeguarded and maintained only by the force of our solidarity"[23].

In writing his speeches, in order to support and corroborate his statements, the preacher quoted mainly lay authors, some of them foreign but most of them belonging to the corpus of Romanian literature[24].

Romanian poets are remembered, too: in speaking of the danger of other languages infiltrating everyday life, but especially the liturgical services conducted in the Romanian Orthodox Church, the author illustrates it with the verses of Bolintineanu: ,,In our monastic cells/ And our ancestral Church/ Alien, foreign languages are now heard"[25]. The great poet Vasile Alecsandri is quoted, in relation to the cause and efects of forsaking the ancestral faith: ,,gradually, the national character is lost/ when it people stray from the faith of their ancestors"[26].

The manner of **sermon delivery** aims to convey the meaning and define the chosen topic as clearly as possible, by means of explanations, arguments and illustrations. Here are a few relevant instances: the national Church is described as the ,,safe haven of Romanians"[27]; in addressing the woman's role and position within the family and society, the speaker points out that ,,a true woman is like a sun that constantly casts light on man's path and enlightens his life"[28]. National consciousness is perceived as a duty, by which ,,each one is bound to

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[19] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvinte despre Marea Unire*, p. 34.

[20] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvinte despre Marea Unire*, p. 34.

[21] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvinte despre Marea Unire*, p. 34.

[22] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvinte despre Marea Unire*, p. 34.

[23] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvinte despre Marea Unire*, p. 42.

[24] Pr. asist. dr. Nicuşor Beldiman, *Predica în Biserica Ortodoxă Română din Muntenia*, p. 49.

[25] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări şi predici*, p. 37.

[26] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări şi predici*, p. 111.

[27] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări şi predici*, p. 18.

[28] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări şi predici*, p. 45.

preach love for our language, our faith and our land, for the institution of the Church… for everything that pertains to the specific character of our national life"[29]. The role of school is described in the following terms: „the school is called to equip children with teachings addressing both their minds and their hearts, educating them to observe God's moral commandments and establishing in their young hearts, the Christian foundation for the loftiest feelings"[30]. The duties of teachers and professors are many and varied. Beside their mission to „stir the religious sense in the tender souls of the young"[31], they must also contribute to „improving the material and moral welfare of the people"[32]; to support the mission of the school, all formative factors must cooperate - „the people, the teachers, and the state authorities"[33].

In another speech on the human character and ways of shaping it, as a special set of qualities possessed by every person, preacher Miron Cristea describes the purpose of school education based on the assertions of great pedagogues and educators: „producing religious and moral characters"[34]. Shaping one's character presupposes developing discernment and a moral sense and educating the will to follow it. Parents ought to be the most authentic examples of moral life, while the duty of school education is to cultivate and foster the moral sense and moral discernment of pupils. The main objective of religious education is to instill in pupils' souls the awareness of God's existence and cultivate trust in Him[35]. All disciplines have their own clearly-defined formative role. Learning history, for instance, strengthens the moral sense by providing examples worth following, while literature offers models of moral (and also ideal) lifestyle[36]. Addressing the issue of welfare, the preacher Miron Cristea shows great interest in the prosperity of the Romanian nation – to be gained through labour because „an idle people has no future, however favorable the external circumstances, however rich the natural environment might be"[37]. Work requires a degree of skill in order to exploit natural resources rationally, and this ability is pursued by school eduaction, which has to enlighten minds so that the people may employ their material means correctly[38]. According to the author of these speeches, the Orthodox people are „the foundation of the Church"[39]. Compared to other institutions, the Church has a noble purpose: it pursues the salvation of the faithful. Beside its attributes as a „safe haven" and: *„shelter and protection for the entire people"*[40], the Church is *„the spring that offers refreshing water to all those who are thirsty and burdened by life… as no other institution or cultural establishment bestows such confort upon the souls afflicted with the tribulations of this life, as does the Church with its pious, healing and conforting prayers…"*[41].

CONCLUDING REMARKS

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[29] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 60.
[30] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 63.
[31] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 67.
[32] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 73.
[33] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 75.
[34] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 178.
[35] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 181.
[36] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 182.
[37] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 218.
[38] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 218.
[39] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 258.
[40] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 260.
[41] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări și predici*, p. 259.

This collection of speeches dedicated to various occasions, evince a special quality of their author, patriarch Miron Cristea: his ability to surprise his listeners, by selecting topics that are religious but also have a cultural impact, outlining and substantiating the tenets of national identity and the process of awakening. A few examples illustrate this: in explaining the reasons for building a national cathedral and its importance for the life of the Romanian people, he argues that this effort demonstrates to the future generations „the worth of those who made this sacrifice to construct, complete and adorn it"[42], and is „the visible token of their zeal, dignity, and fervor as a nation and as a Church"[43], ultimately serving as „a symbol of our Romanian Orthodox people's unity in faith"[44]. Another special characteristic of this preacher is his manner of explaining the reasons for establishing a fund for the Romanian theatre, with a view to promoting morality through Romanian culture. The national theatre is described as „a temple where the major arts, in harmony and concerted endeavour, oppose the social evil, fight against vices and passions and, most importantly, shape characters"[45] as well as „an institution with a cultural mission to accomplish"[46]. The preacher pleads for those plays inspired from the life of the Romanian people, so that „our greatest and rarest gifts should be celebrated on its altar"[47]. In another speech, he addressed the role of a museum in the life of a nation. A museum entails remembering the past as a source of self-confidence for a people, and consequently the museum becomes „an altar cultivating national traditions… a temple commemorating and preserving the traces of the old ways of living"[48]. The author presented, in every detail, the contents of the museum he envisages, and indicated all its departments as guidelines for edifying such an institution.

His penchant for beauty, his patriotism evinced by the ardent speeches delivered by patriarch Miron Cristea before he was installed in office, announced like a sunrise all his actions and projects which he later undertook as the first patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

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[7] Şandru, Ilie, „Miron Cristea şi Marea Unire", în „Naţiunea", Serie nouă, Anul VIII, 13 februarie 2013.

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[42] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări şi predici*, p. 134.
[43] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări şi predici*, p. 134.
[44] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări şi predici*, p. 135.
[45] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări şi predici*, p. 171.
[46] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări şi predici*, p. 173.
[47] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări şi predici*, p. 174.
[48] † Miron Cristea, *Cuvântări şi predici*, p. 192.

OUTLINES OF COMPARATIVE VIEW OF HINDU AND CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

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Motto: «Every word, every image used for God is a distortion more than a description». (Anthony de Mello)

ABSTRACT

Mysticism is about knowing and unifying man with God (unio mystica), in a process that involves concerted cognitive and ascetic efforts. Mysticism does not follow, according to the classic pattern, the moralizing of man, but reach at the direct and immediate knowledge of God. Thus, mysticism is not, firstly, a matter of ethics, but a theoretical or, rather, an epistemological one. For what is being pursued and done in the states of ecstasy is a different kind of knowledge than the one allowed to people in the common state, knowledge which is also a special state of grace. Thus, in order to achieve the mystical state, Hinduism emphasizes true knowledge. The union with Brahman is given, but it must also be realized consciously through the salvific gnosis. The process of union in Hinduism is accomplished by removing the veil of ignorance (māya), that is, by knowing that the world is illusory, by the act of consciousness that man is essentially, always, identical to God. The knowledge (jñāna), obtained through meditative contemplation, is the path of mysticism in Hinduism. Once unity with God is given, it must only be consciously accomplished by removing the illusion that man would not be one with God-Brahman. The state of union is at the disposal of the ascetic, who has withdrawn from the world and lives only for contemplation. The model of Hindu ontological identity, Christianity opposes the model of personal transfiguration, through the continuous elongation of the person in God, realization possible only from the perspective of divine uncreated energies. God is not present with His being in the space that He created, but by plasticizing the reasons of creation, He constitutes the latter as an organic whole, harmonious in himself, which He sustains through His will. Unlike the ontological identity between God and the creature of Hindu perspective, the Christian mysticism of the Eastern Church postulates the eternally ontological difference between man and God.

Keywords: mysticism; Hinduism; Christianity; unification; being; knowledge; person; transfiguration; divine energies; identity;

INTRODUCTION

Bertrand Russell, a philosopher who cannot be suspected of sentimentality or of a bias in favor of mysticism, wrote in a famous essay as follows: "The greatest men who have been philosophers have felt the need both of science and of mysticism." He adds that the union of the mystic and the man of science constitutes "the highest eminence that it is possible to achieve in the world of thought." Further, "this emotion [mysticism] is the inspirer of whatever is best in man."[1] Unarguably, coming forth from such an illustrious

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[1] Bertrand RUSSELL, *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays,* London, Longmans, Green & Co., Inc., 1921, pp. 4, 12. As examples of this union of mysticism and science in the greatest philosophers, Russell mentions

philosopher and scientist, this is a remarkably high estimate of the value of mysticism. Nonetheless, no definition could be both meaningful and sufficiently comprehensive to include all experiences that, at some point or other, have been described as "mystical." In 1899 Dean W. R. Inge listed twenty-five definitions. Since then the study of world religions has considerably expanded, and new, allegedly mystical cults have sprung up everywhere. The etymological lineage of the term provides little assistance in formulating an unambiguous definition. The word "mystic" has its origin in the Greek mysteries. A mystic was one who had been initiated into these mysteries, through which he had gained an esoteric knowledge of divine things and been 'reborn into eternity'. His object was to break through the world of history and time into that of eternity and timelessness. The method was through initiation ceremonies of the sort so vividly described by the Latin writer, Apuleius, in 'The Golden Ass'. Through the mysteries the initiated entered into something *holy* and *numinous*, a secret wisdom about which it was unlawful for him to speak. The word 'mystery' *(mysterion)* comes from the Greek verb *myein*, to shut or close the lips or eyes. This term signifies in general that which is unknowable or valuable knowledge that is kept secret. In the language of the early Christians the mysteries were those religious teachings that were carefully guarded from the knowledge of the profane.[2]

However, in due course of time the concept of *mysticism* came to have an extended, a different meaning. In that syncretism of Greek and Oriental philosophy which occurred in the centuries immediately preceding the birth of Christ, known as Neo-Platonism, it came to mean a particular sort of approach to the whole problem of reality, in which the intellectual and more especially the intuitive faculties came into play. As a result of the fusion of Christian and Neoplatonist ideas in the early centuries of the Christian era, a system of so-called mystical theology came into existence, which was one of the main foundations of Christian mysticism.[3]

Mysticism, according to its etymology, implies a *relation to mystery*. In philosophy, *Mysticism* is either a religious tendency and desire of the human soul towards an intimate union with the Divinity, or a system growing out of such a tendency and desire. As a philosophical system, Mysticism considers as the end of philosophy the direct union of the human soul with the Divinity through contemplation and love, and attempts to determine the processes and the means of realizing this end. This contemplation, according to Mysticism, is not based on a merely analogical knowledge of the Infinite, but as a direct and immediate intuition of the Infinite. According to its tendency, it may be either speculative or practical, as it limits itself to mere knowledge or traces duties for action and life; contemplative or affective, according as it emphasizes the part of intelligence or the part of the will.[4]

Mysticism has its fount in what is the raw material of all religion and is also the inspiration of much of philosophy, poetry, art, and music, a consciousness of a *beyond,* of something which, though it is interwoven with it, is not of the external world of material

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Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plato, and Spinoza, but this list is obviously intended to be only illustrative and not exhaustive

[2] In pagan antiquity the word *mystery* was used to designate certain esoteric doctrines, such as Pythagoreanism, or certain ceremonies that were performed in private or whose meaning was known only to the initiated, e.g., the Eleusinian rites, Phallic worship. Ernest R. HULL, "Mystery", in Charles G. HERBERMANN (edit.),*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 10: *Mass Music-Newman*, 1907-1913, p. 1313.
URL: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/herbermann/cathen10.html

[3] F.C. HAPPOLD, *Mysticism. A Study and an Anthology*, Penguin Group, 1990, p. 18.

[4] G.H. JOYCE, "Mysticism", in Charles G. HERBERMANN (edit.),*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume 10: *Mass Music-Newman*, p. 1317.

phenomena, of an *unseen* over and above the seen. In the developed mystic this consciousness is present in an intense and highly specialized form.

The mystical element enters into the commoner forms of religious experience when religious feeling surpasses its rational content, that is, when the bidden, non-rational, unconscious elements predominate and determine the emotional life and the intellectual attitude. In the true mystic there is an extension of normal consciousness, a release of latent powers and a widening of vision, so that aspects of truth unfathomed by the rational intellect are revealed to him. Both in feeling and thought he apprehends an immanence of the temporal in the eternal and the eternal in the temporal. In the religious mystic there is a direct experience of the Presence of God. Though he may not be able to describe it in words, though he may not be able logically to demonstrate its validity, to the mystic his experience is fully and absolutely valid and is surrounded with complete certainty.[5]

Not only have mystics been found in all ages, in all parts of the world and in all religious systems, but also mysticism has manifested itself in similar or identical forms wherever the mystical consciousness has been present. Because of this it has sometimes been called the *Perennial Philosophy*. Due to its wide range of meanings, the commentators disagree about the characteristics of the mystical experience. Those mentioned in William James's classical *The Varieties of Religious Experience* rank among the most commonly accepted. *Ineffability* emphasizes the private, or at least incommunicable, quality of the experience. Mystics have, of course, written quite openly and often abundantly about their experience. But, by their testimony, words can never capture their full meaning. Secondly, James mentions the *noetic* quality of the experience.

To be sure, mystical insight hardly ever augments theoretical knowledge. Nevertheless its insight suffuses a person's knowledge with a unique, all-encompassing sense of integration that definitely belongs to the noetic order. This point deserves emphasis against those who assert that mysticism is the same everywhere and that only the post-mystical interpretation accounts for the difference.[6] The *pasivity* of the mystical experience may well be its most distinctive characteristic. Its gratuitous, undeserved nature stands out, however much the privileged subject may have applied himself to ascetic exercises or meditative techniques.

Transiency, a more controversial characteristic, has been challenged, for great mystics have remained for prolonged periods in enhanced states of consciousness. Intermittent intensive experiences figured therein as moments of a more comprehensive surpassing awareness. Perhaps we should speak of the *rhythmic*, rather than the transient, quality of mystical life.[7] To James's four characteristics another one may be added: *integration*. Expanded beyond its ordinary limits, the mystical consciousness somehow succeeds in overcoming previously existing opposition in its integration with a higher reality. This, however, should not be interpreted to mean that all restrictions cease to exist.[8]

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[5] He has been "there", he has "seen", he "knows". With St. Paul, in the poem by Frederic W.H. Myers, he can say: "Whoso has felt the spirit of the Highest / Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny. / Yea with one voice, O world, though thou deniest, / Stand thou on that side, for on this am I." F.C. Happold, *Mysticism. A Study and an Anthology*, p. 19.

[6] Distinctions begin with the noetic qualities of the experiences themselves.

[7] Louis DUPRÉ, "Mysticism" [First Edition], in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Second Edition, Lindsay JONES, Editor in Chief, vol. 9: *Mary • Ndembu Religion*, Macmillan Reference USA, Thomson Gale, 2005, pp. 6341-6342.

[8] Some of them clearly maintain a sense of transcendence within the union. This is precisely what gives them their distinctly religious character. V. *Ibid*, p. 6342.

1. AN ANALYSIS OF HINDU MYSTICISM

Mysticism is about knowing and unifying man with God (*unio mystica*) in a process that involves concerted cognitive and ascetic efforts. Mysticism does not follow, according to the classic pattern, the moralizing of man, but reach at the direct and immediate knowledge of God. Thus, mysticism is not, firstly, a matter of ethics, but a theoretical or, rather, an epistemological one. For what is being pursued and done in the states of ecstasy is a different kind of knowledge than the one allowed to people in the common state, knowledge which is also a special state of grace.[9] The examination of the great mystical currents begins (in many specialized treatises) with the Hindu movement. This seems to have preceded other approaches to this phenomenon, if not into metaphysical speculation, at least in its precise examination. The vast majority of metaphysical problems had already been identified by the wise men of ancient India, who had found subtle solutions, but these seemed to by advocate of an incomplete thinking system, of course, outside the space of divine positive Revelation.[10] Differently from the nature mysticism of the West or Far East, in Hindu mysticism there is a strong element of *world-denial* and yet there is *world-affirmation* also. There is both monism and theism, at many different periods. World-denial appears in Indian thought and practice, alongside world-affirmation, and it developed gradually. After the oldest sacred books of Vedas came the Brahmanas, ritual texts for the Brahmin priests, and the Araṇyakas, "forest treatises", for those who went apart from the world. These were followed by the more systematic Upaniṣads, "sessions" which overlap the previous texts so that the first of them is called the *Great Forest* Upaniṣad.[11]

No equivalent of the term 'mysticism' exists in Sanskrit and its use with regard to what we find in the *Upaniṣads* may be misleading: The dominant philosophical tradition in the West insists that the term is non-cognitive so that it has no place in any epistemological investigation, cognition being defined as knowing by sense perception and reasoning. But as far as the Upaniṣads are concerned, the fact that mystical viewing of reality is not a process of intellection does not mean that what we know in such viewing is only a state of feeling and not of knowledge. Mystical viewing amounts to what we call direct experience, in English usually termed 'intuition'. It is accepted that it may illumine life in some way, but what it delivers does not qualify for the name 'knowledge'.[12] But the teachers claim that what they know in such experience is knowledge (*vidyā,*) indeed such knowledge is higher (*para*) compared to the knowledge derived from sense perception and reasoning which is called lower (*apara*).

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[9] Ioan Gh. Savin, *Mistica şi Ascetica Ortodoxă* (*Mysticism and Orthodox Ascetics*), Forward by dr. Antonie Plămădeală, Sibiu, 1996, p. 23.

[10] Jacques De Marquette, *Mistica. Hinduism – Budism – Grecia –Israel – Creştinism – Islam* (*Mysticism. Hinduism - Buddhism - Greece - Israel - Christianity – Islam),* transl. Dan Dumbrăveanu and Victoria Comnea, Herald, Bucureşti, 1996, p. 29.

[11] From early settlements of the Aryan invaders on the plains of the Indus River and its tributaries, the subjugation and also mingling of older peoples, there developed over a thousand years more orderly societies, spreading down the Ganges plains. With the growth of towns and cities there was leisure for speculative thought, the formation of schools of doctrine and meditation, and some reaction against city life towards the peace of the forest..

[12] But the teachers claim that what they know in such experience is knowledge (*vidyā,*) indeed such knowledge is higher (*para*) compared to the knowledge derived from sense perception and reasoning which is called lower (*apara*). Cf. Pratima Bowes, "Mysticism in the Upanishads and in Śankara's Vedānta", in *The Yogi and the Mystic. Studies in Indian and comparative Mysticism*, Karel Werner, ed., Durham Indological Series No.1, Curzon Press Ltd., 1994, p. 53.
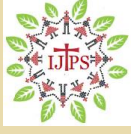
The Upaniṣads, like other philosophies and science, look for unifying principles in the universe. They try to explain the world in elemental terms, emphasizing especially power, breath and, surprisingly, food. One well-known Upaniṣad affirms that the cosmic Being, Brahman, "is food". For food, as living matter, is the basis of life upon which breath depends, as well as mind, understanding and bliss. Hence matter and spirit are bound together in a mysticism of union with the whole of existence, which is a participation in, rather than a withdrawal from the world. So the Upaniṣadic mystic cries out in ecstasy, in one of the rare personal statements:

> "I am food! I am food! I am food!
> I am an eater of food . . .
> I am a maker of verses. . .
> I am first of the world-order,
> I am earlier than the gods.
> I, who am food, eat the eater of food!
> I have overcome the whole world!"[13]

The Upaniṣads seek for a single principle as the changeless ground of the universe. Sometimes this is the soul or self *(atman),* both particular and universal. When the sage Yājňavalkya was leaving his wife to go forth to the forest-dwelling stage of life he offered her a settlement. She asked whether this would make her immortal and if not what could achieve that. He replied that only "love of the soul" could make anything dear, enumerating husband, wife, sons and all possessions. It is the Soul that should be seen, heard, thought about and considered, for by understanding the Soul all the universe is known.[14]

Another term used in the Upaniṣads is Brahman, which at first meant power and developed into sacred power, universal spirit, world-ground, the All, cosmic Being.

> "The formless Brahman is the breath and the space within the self. There is nothing higher than this, for it is 'the Real of the real'. Living creatures are real and this is their reality."[15]

These two terms, Atman and Brahman, are used in subtle ways, both distinctly and identically. The ancient gods themselves were thinned down from their thousands into one, and that was Brahman. The only duality that remained was between universal and individual souls and these almost inevitably became identified, so that Brahman and Atman are often interchangeable terms.

> "The whole universe is Brahman, and one should calmly worship That as the being in which we live and move and dissolve. It contains the entire world; it never speaks and has no care. . . . This Soul of mine in the heart is Brahman, and when I go from here I shall merge into it."[16]

Mystical unity in the monistic sense is asserted in "great words" or utterances, such as «I am Brahman», and especially «Thou art That» (the famous Sanskrit utterance: *tat tvam asi* – तत्त्वमसि) This phrase occurred in a series of parables where a philosopher, Uddalaka, instructed his son in the true nature of being. Rejecting the formal priestly education that the boy had received, the father expounded that teaching "whereby what has not been heard or

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[13] *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 3, 10.6, in R.C. ZAEHNER, ed., *Hindu Scriptures*, 1938, rpt. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1978; rpt. Everyman's Library, David Campbell Publishers LTD, 1992.

[14] *The Brhadāranyaka Upanishad – With the Commentary of Śankarācārya*, 2.4., transl. by Swami Madhavamanda, Advesta Ashrama, Calcutta, 1997.

[15] *Ibid*, 2.3.

[16] *Chāndogya Upanishad*, 3.14, in R.C. ZAEHNER, ed., *Hindu Scriptures*. `

thought or understood becomes heard, thought and understood". In nine examples he affirmed that all creatures have Being as their origin, support and dwelling.[17]

> "That subtle essence is the Soul of the whole universe. That is reality. That is the Soul. You are That."[18]

Bees collect the juices from different trees and reduce them to unity so that they cannot distinguish whether they are the juice of this tree or that. So when creatures merge into Being, they do not know what individuals they were formerly. Similarly, when rivers flow into the sea they do not know their former individuality, but they become that Being.[19]

In the Upaniṣads, the unifying and the spiritualizing tendencies eventually merged in the idea of an inner soul (*ātman*), the Absolute at the heart of all reality to which only the mind has access. This is not a metaphysical theory, but a mystical path to liberation. It requires ascetical training and mental discipline to overcome the desires, oppositions, and limitations of individual selfhood.

> "As a man, when in the embrace of a beloved wife, knows nothing within or without, so this person, when in the embrace of the intelligent Soul, knows nothing within or without."[20]

Clearly, if *ātman* is identified with *Brahman*, then the logical conclusion is that the Self is in all things, and all things in the Self. The capital 'S' here is meant to indicate that the 'Self' that is assimilated to Brahman is not the everyday phenomenal self (i.e. the mind/body), but rather that aspect of the human being that is qualitatively similar to the transcendent principle of Brahman – that is, the undifferentiated conscious awareness, the inner sense of pure being which humans are capable of experiencing in the primary Hindu mystical practice: meditative absorption, or *samādhi*.

Here lies the origin of the *advaita* (nondualist monism that would become dominant in classical Hinduism). But even if any distinction beyond the One were to be a mere *illusion*, as in the extreme interpretation of *māyā* (originally, the created world itself) given by most famous Hindu thinker, Śaṅkara (8th century AD), it still remains an opposition to indiscriminate Unity. Metaphysical speculation in classical Hinduism may occasionally have surpassed its mystical tendency. But that there *was* a religious experience at the basis of this extreme monism cannot be doubted.

> "The starting-point of Śaṅkara and the Sāṁkhya-Yoga is the *experience* of the immortality of the soul; and immortality in this case does not mean the infinite prolongation of human life in time: that is *Samsāra* which the Hindus regard rather as a living death; it is death-in-life, not life-in-death. It means rather an unconditioned and absolutely static condition which knows nothing of time and space and upon which death has no hold; and because it is not only pure Being, but also pure consciousness and pure bliss, it must be analogous to life."[21]

It would be difficult to decide whether Śaṅkara's uncompromising monism was an outcome of his experience for which he found confirmation in his predecessors' interpretations of the Upaniṣads or whether his previous acceptance of monism on philosophical grounds found subsequent support in the overwhelming experience of oneness
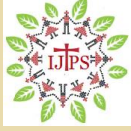
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[17] Geoffrey PARRINDER, *Mysticism in the World's Religions*, Oneworld Publications, Oxford, 1995, p. 35.

[18] *Chāndogya Upanishad*, 6.8-16.

[19] Geoffrey PARRINDER, *Mysticism in the World's Religions*, p. 35.

[20] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4,3.22.

[21] R.C. ZAEHNER, *Hinduism*, Oxford University Press, London, 1966, p. 74.

in *samādhi*. The Upaniṣads, of course, contain materials which enabled other schools also to claim their support for their own different interpretations. It has, however, been an undisputed tenet within Śaṅkara's school for centuries that 'this world of diversity is false; reality, myself included, is non-dual *brahman*; the evidence of it is *vedānta* [= Upaniṣads], gurus as well as direct experience'.[22] As some scholar point out, we have here an almost inextricable symbiosis of doctrine and experience, but what is important is that Śaṅkara most emphatically insisted on the actual realization of personal experience without which the doctrine means nothing. One has to know the truth directly; all else, including verbal knowledge of the doctrine, is still within the sphere of ignorance. Again: to know *brahman* is to be *brahman*. The practical way to this realization is the way of knowledge which became known as Jñāna-Yoga.[23]

Of course, not all the Upaniṣads were radically monist in their expression, nor was the Vedāntic theology the only mysticism of the self in India. A related but philosophically distinct school of Indian thought also has its roots in the Upaniṣads. In Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad we read:

> "Two birds, companions and friends, nestle on the very same tree. One of them eats a tasty fig; the other, not eating, looks on."[24]

Here we see a very early expression of the dualist school that sees man as a dual entity of mind-stuff (*prakṛti*) and pure spirit (*puruṣa*). The tree is the body; the first bird, the enjoyer of sense pleasures, i.e. the phenomenal self; the second bird, the eternal witness, the pure conscious knower of all cognition and experience.[25]Thus, the system of Sāṁkhya-Yoga advocates a radical dualism. It recognizes two irreducible principles of reality: *prakṛti*, the material principle and source of energy, cause of both the material world and psychic experience, and *puruṣa*, discrete units of pure consciousness similar to the *ātman* of the Upaniṣads. Yet *puruṣa* must be liberated from confusion with *prakṛti* by means of concentrated effort. Sāṁkhya thought, although it has no place for deity and is specifically atheistic, was assimilated into the age-old tradition of yoga, providing the practice with a soteriological and cosmological framework. This mystical self-isolation recognizes no absolute One beyond the individual spirit. Liberation here means the opposite of merging with a transcendent Self. If the idea of God appears at all, it is as that of one *puruṣa* next to all others, their model insofar as God is entirely free of cosmic contamination.[26]

The inevitable differences in descriptions of the ultimate and its real nature, well known already from the Upaniṣads themselves, led quite naturally to the establishment of different schools of Vedāntism of which there are at least five. The most important one after Śaṅkara's is *Viśiṣṭādvaita* (literally "Advaita with uniqueness; qualifications") of *Rāmāṇuja* (11th century AD). In it the popular path of *Bhakti* (love for God) received an elaborate

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[22] Cf. A.J. ALSTON, "Śaṅkara on the Absolute", in *A Śaṅkara Source-book*, vol. 1, Shanti Sadan, London 1981, pp. 62, 112.

[23] Śaṅkara's Yoga path follows in many details the older schemes of Yoga training as known particularly from Patañjali's account, but it also has its own specific techniques of developing the discriminatory faculty of the mind whereby it could sift through its experiences and eliminate from them those which are concerned with transitory, unreal features as compared with those which point to the eternal and real. Karel WERNER, "Mysticism and Indian Spirituality", in *The Yogi and the Mystic*, K. Werner, ed., pp. 28-29.

[24] *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 3.1.1, in R.C. ZAEHNER, ed., *Hindu Scriptures*; Patrick OLIVELLE, *Upaniṣads*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 274.

[25] Paul MULLER-ORTEGA, *Classical Yoga Traditions of India*, classroom lectures, Spring, 1999, p. 135.

[26] In its pure form, Sāṁkhya-Yoga, far from leaning toward pantheist monism (as Vedantic spirituality does), results in the most extreme individualism. Louis DUPRÉ, "Mysticism" [First Edition], p. 6343.

doctrinal backing in which a certain relative or qualified status is allowed for individual beings also in the context of ultimate reality which is conceived in personalized terms. Thus Vedāntism, like Buddhism, reflects the ineffability of the ultimate experience which does not lend itself to simple descriptions.[27]

A mystical theology is less concerned about logical consistency and sharply defined concepts than about adequate translations of the actual experience. This is particularly the case in a tradition wherein the mystical element constitutes most of the core of the religion itself. Hence in describing such later Hindu thinkers, like the so influential *Rāmāṇuja* as "qualified dualists", we should be aware that we are referring more to a practical devotional than a speculative-metaphysical attitude. Rāmāṇuja may never have abandoned the metaphysical assumptions of the monist tradition in which he grew up. But finding absolute monism inadequate for the practice of spiritual life, he reaffirmed the traditional concept of a God endowed with personal attributes (*saguṇa brahman*), instead of the attributeless absolute substance (*nirguṇa brahman*). God thereby is not merely a model but also a redeemer who assists the soul on its path to liberation.[28]

In thus qualifying the monist doctrine, Rāmāṇuja was inspired by what the *Bhāgavadgīta* (c. 2nd century BCE) had assumed throughout. This mystical poem, perhaps the finest spiritual work to come from the East, is hard to classify by Western canons. The narrative assumes a clearly theistic position: the god Viṣṇu incarnated in Kṛṣṇa exhorts the hero Arjuna on the eve of battle with his stepbrother to take heart and fight. But the message he delivers ranges from traditional piety and observance of the ancient rites to the monism of the Vedānta, combined with the dualistic cosmology of Sāṁkhya-Yoga. The work is a synthesis in all respects. Not only does it unite the monist and theistic strands, but it also presents a method of combining the active with the contemplative life. It advises a mental discipline that enables a person to act with total detachment from the fruits of his deed. By itself, the active life (*karman*) weaves its own web of causes and effects, entailing an endless cycle of birth and death – the very essence of what a person seeks to be liberated from.[29]

Yet various kinds of yoga detach the mind from this natural determination, while still allowing a person to fulfill the obligations of his station in life. Through equanimity of emotions, holy indifference, and purity of heart, even the active person will come to detect the one presence of *brahman* in all things. The 'Gospel of Hindu spirituality' (L. Renou), *Gīta* is not a manual of yogic practice. It is a mystical work that culminates in a vision of God. A most powerful theophany completes Krishna's description of God's presence in the world (chap. 11). Still the poem concludes with the sobering advice to seek God in the ordinary way of piety rather than through self-concentration. The advice was taken up by the *bhakti* movement, which produced some of the finest flowers of Hindu spirituality and which continues to nourish much of Indian piety today.[30]

There have been objections to this kind of interpretation of differing mystical doctrines and the consequent claim of a common core in all mystical traditions. S.T. Katz expressed it bluntly saying that mysticism promises "something for everybody if not

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[27] Karel WERNER, "Mysticism and Indian Spirituality", in *The Yogi and the Mystic*, p. 29.

[28] Surendranath DASGUPTA, *Hindu Mysticism,* Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., New York, 1927, p. 59.

[29] *Understanding Mysticism*, edited by Richard WOODS, Garden City, New York, 1980, p. 158.

[30] Cf. Louis DUPRÉ, "Mysticism" [First Edition], p. 6344. See also: Donald H. BISHOP, ed., *Mysticism and the Mystical Experience: East and West*, London and Toronto, 1995. A useful collection of essays surveying mysticism in various traditions; F. Samuel BRAINARD, *Reality and Mystical Experience*, University Park, Pa., 2000.

everything to everybody".[31] But that is an ill-founded criticism. The differing interpretations merely express the infinite richness of the ultimate which must be bigger than individual minds which can therefore approach it from a large variety of starting points. Various simplified descriptions of the ultimate goal become wrong only if taken literally and if they are individually believed in to the exclusion of other descriptions. That can happen only when the doctrine, accepted on authority, becomes more important than the experience, which means that the mystic path is not really being followed. Then we are in the province of theological or philosophical polemics. These do occur also, of course, among historians of religions if they bring into their inquiry personal preferences or beliefs.[32]

With Mahāyāna Buddhism and Vedāntism Indian spirituality reached its peak, particularly in the elaboration of mystical doctrines. But the whole process of mystical endeavors did not stop there. Although Buddhism eventually disappeared from the Indian scene to flourish elsewhere, Yoga and broader mystical movements as well as doctrinal creativity have continued to live in India till modern times.[33]

2. THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN VISION ON MYSTICISM

The term *mysticism* remains colored if not hampered by the complexity of its own history: by its original Greek etymology (meaning "silence, secrecy, initiation, Ineffability"), by the early Christian use of the word *mystical* to describe the deeper significance of Scripture and liturgy, by the later Christian definition of *mystical theology* as loving union with God by grace, and by popular uses of mysticism as a label for anything nebulous, esoteric, occult, or supernatural. Although mysticism is now firmly entrenched within the vocabulary of the modern study of religions, its usage overlaps and to some extent competes with its employment in specifically theological contexts. Christian or at least theistic mysticism continues to be given prominence even in studies treating the subject at a more generic or theoretical level (e.g., in much philosophy of religion). Given its persistently Christian associations and the fact that the term has no real counterpart in other traditions, it is not surprising that the suitability of mysticism as a neutral, global term has been questioned by some scholars. Others, more radically, have challenged the authenticity of the concept itself, viewing it as a product of post-Enlightenment universalism.[34]

Unlike some other religions, Christianity has never equated its ideal of holiness with the attainment of mystical states. Nor did it encourage seeking such states for their own sake. Nevertheless, a mystical impulse undeniably propelled it in its origin and determined much of its later development. The synoptic Gospels present Jesus as dwelling in the continuous, intimate presence of God. His public life begins with a prayer and a vision: "While Jesus after his baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape like a dove" (*Lk* 3:21–22). It ends with a prayer of total abandonment: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (*Lk* 23:46). Jesus initiates all important public acts with a prayer. He often withdraws from the crowd for long periods of solitary prayer. He interprets his entire existence through its reference to God, whom he calls Father. To himself

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[31] See the editor's *Introduction* to *Mysticism and Philosophical* Analysis, Steven T. KATZ, ed., New York - Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 1.
[32] Karel WERNER, "Mysticism and Indian Spirituality", p. 29.
[33] As shown by the lives and work of such personalities as Ramakrishna, Ramana Maharshi, Aurobindo, Anandamayi Ma, Osho, Swami Sri Yukteswar, and others.
[34] Peter MOORE (2005), "Mysticism [Further considerations]", in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd Edition, Lindsay JONES, Ed., vol. 9, p. 6355.

he applies Isaiah's messianic words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." The same Spirit he promises to those who pray in His name. [35]

Several themes give an overview of the New Testament soteriology: The Kingdom of Heaven and its Messenger, Christ the Messiah-Logos, the Light; the Paracletus or the Holy Spirit, who consecrate the mission of the Logos and make present His Person in history; Christ ascended into heaven will have to return as the Supreme Judge. The Kingdom, inaugurated here on earth: the Church is waiting for the final eschatology, of the Parousia of the Son, Who will come on the clouds to judge, then restore the perfect creation in the hands of the Father, intended to contemplate, in eternity, the Divine Image.[36]

The mystical quality of Jesus' life is most clearly stated in the Fourth Gospel. Some of the words attributed to him may have originated in theological reflection rather than in his own expression. But they thereby witness all the more powerfully to the mystical impulse he was able to transmit to his followers. Biblical speculations on the Word of God are reinterpreted as expressions of God's personal revelation in an incarnated divine Logos. The intimate union between the Father and the Word is, through the Holy Spirit, granted to all true believers. Indeed, the presence of the Spirit entitles them to the same love with which God loves his Son. In John's gospel the two principal currents of Christian mysticism have their source: the theology of the divine image that calls the Christian to conformity, and the theology that presents the intimacy with God as a relation of universal love.[37]

The tenor of early Christian mysticism was determined by the New Testament and by trends in Hellenistic Judaism (especially Philo Judaeus's scriptural theology and the late Judaic meaning of *gnōsis*). A third factor, usually referred to as Neoplatonism, must be added. Yet that movement, though influential in the development of Christian spirituality, may be too restricted an account of its beginnings; Origen (and, to some extent, even Clement) had already developed a mystical theology of the image before Plotinus. It might be more accurate, then, to look to the entire philosophically Platonic, religiously syncretic, and generally Gnostic culture of Alexandria at the end of the second century.[38] But soon Plotinus's philosophy was to provide much of the ideological apparatus for a Christian theology of the image. Though Plotinus's thought leaves no doubts about its Platonic origins, it was profoundly affected by such religious influences as the mystery religions, Gnosticism, Philo's Judaism, and that syncretism of Hellenistic currents and older Egyptian traditions that is usually referred to as Hermetism.[39]

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[35] For discussions of Christian mysticism, the reader may consult the introductions to many volumes of the "Classics of Western Spirituality" and the three-volume *A History of Christian Spirituality* (New York, 1963–1969) by Louis BOUYER, Jean LECLERCQ, Francois VANDENBROUCKE, and Louis COGNET.

[36] Serge MISSATKINE, *Mistica Noului Testament* (The Mysticism of the New Testament), in Marie-Madeleine DAVY, ed., *Enciclopedia doctrinelor mistice* (*Encyclopedia of mystical doctrines*), vol. I: *Şamanism, Greci, Evrei, Gnoză, Creştinism primitiv* (*Shamanism, Greeks, Hebrews, Gnosis, Early Christianity*), Amacord, Timişoara, 1997, p. 227.

[37] For details: Robert S. ELLWOOD, *Mysticism and Religion*, 2nd ed., New York and Oxford, U.K., 1999. One of the few introductory surveys of major issues and positions in the study of mysticism, stressing the inseparability of mysticism from the rest of religion.

[38] In that climate Ammonius Saccas himself, Origen's and Plotinus's common master, grew up and taught.

[39] Plotinus's philosophy as exposed in his nine treatises (the *Enneads*) is often presented as an emanational process that originates in an undetermined Absolute (the One), becomes intelligible in a realm of mind (the *nous*), and arrives at its final hypostasis in a world soul (the *psyche*) shared by all individual souls. Such a presentation misses Plotinus's central insight and the source of its mystical fertility, namely, the immanence of the One in all the lower hypostases. The mystical-intellectual process for him consists in a return to that ever-present One, beyond the vision of the intelligible forms. Cf. Louis DUPRÉ, "Mysticism" [First Edition], p. 6346.

In some ways – as many scholar suggest – Christian thought is closer to Indian than to Semitic monotheism. For instance, the Hindu *avatār* belief shows to the Christian doctrine of the *Incarnation*, though each has its own distinctive features. The personal God of devotional Hinduism is comparable with the personal Christ who formed the faith from the Resurrection onwards and has remained central to Christian mysticism down the ages. Yet while Christian mysticism has taught and sought ardently union with God it has nearly always avoided, due to its Trinitarian doctrine, that claim to identity of divine and human which was ever-present in Hinduism. The Gospels teach the immanental presence of God, but personalized in Christ. "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17. 21) or "in your midst" and by his healings Christ shows "the kingdom of God come upon you" (Luke 11.20).[40]

The experience of Christ, as described in the New Testament, was a dual experience. It was, first of all, the experience of the earthly Jesus, a man whom his disciples had known as man, who had died and, they believed, had risen again. It was also the experience of the divine indwelling of the Spirit of the risen Christ. These two experiences could not be separated. The man who died on a cross on a desolate hill was also the immanent Christ of whom St Paul spoke when he said, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal 2.20).

An inner experience of the immanence of God in man had been known in India and reflection on it had resulted in those two fundamental statements which are the glory of the Hindu faith. This inner experience was, however, unrelated to history. In consequence Hinduism failed to find and express – though, in the *Gīta,* it moves towards it – a completely satisfactory synthesis between history and not-history, between time and timelessness, between matter and spirit. It fell to Christianity to try to find and express a richer synthesis.[41]

The conception of the relationship of God and the phenomenal world, of spirit and matter, were reorientated and reordered. The map of thought was redrawn and extended. Though the early Christian theologians persisted in declaring that they were only stating 'the faith once given to the saints', they were, though the issue was presented to them in a highly specialized form, unknowingly groping after a solution of the perennial metaphysical problem of how that which we call God was related to the world, of how spirit and matter were connected. Anything which was said could not but be, implicitly, if not explicitly, a fundamental statement on the whole problem of the nature of God, the material universe and man.

In Hinduism there was richness of inner experience and profound meditation on the problem, but in the end the material world was seen only as the 'play' of God and the chief end of man was to escape from the melancholy wheel of birth and death. No Hindu thinker could have written that magnificent passage in St Paul's Epistle to the Romans about the whole creation waiting for deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God.[42]

What the Christian Church asserted was the complete *coinherence* – there is no better word – of matter and spirit, of the One and the All and the All and the One. Only by such an assertion could the experience of the earthly Jesus and the experience of the indwelling

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[40] Christ is present "where two or three are gathered together in my name' (Matt. 18.20) and at the end affirms 'I am with you always' (Matt. 28.20). Geoffrey PARRINDER, *Mysticism in the World's Religions*, p. 142.

[41] F.C. HAPPOLD, *Mysticism. A Study and an Anthology*, p. 111.

[42] In Judaism, essential as were its insights as a prelude for the deeper insights which came out of it, there was a blind spot which resulted in the rejection by the Jews of the revelation when it came. The Greek philosophical mind proved itself incapable of reconciling the One and the Many. *Ibid*, p. 114.

Christ be intellectually fused, only thus could the full immanence of God in the world, as it had been seen in the Jesus of history, be adequately explained. In early Christian thought Christ did not stand alone. He was the second Adam, the first-born of many brothers, the Archetypal Man, man as he is in his essential being. In Christ, said St Athanasius, God was made man *(hominized),* that man might be made God (*deified*).

The mystical identification – one can use no other word – of Christ with the whole of mankind and with the whole of man's nature, flesh as well as spirit, is emphasized time and time again by early Christian thinkers.

> "We hold that to the whole of human nature the whole essence of the Godhead was united.
> . . . He in his fullness took upon himself me in my fullness, and united whole to whole that
> he might in his grace bestow salvation on the whole man".[43]

It has been common to discuss Eastern Orthodox theology and mysticism separately from Western Catholic, but the Orthodox Church regards itself as catholic and universal, and the formal division of East and West did not come till the eleventh century when it was as much attacks from the Western Crusades as doctrinal differences that caused the split. Eastern Christians owed much to the Western Augustine or Gregory the Great, as Westerns were indebted to Eastern teachers like Athanasius and Basil.

In Greek mystical theology, however, the term "divinization" *(theosis)* is often used. Clearly this is not "deification" *(apotheosis)* in the sense of the Roman custom of regarding emperors as gods, which Christians unanimously rejected. St John of Damascus spoke of the interaction of nature and grace in restoring the perfection of man and uniting him progressively with the fullness of God, a "divinization' which was the way to union with God. Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389) spoke of God breathing in 'the divine part' of the soul so that it might receive the energy of God. St Maximus the Confessor (580-662) showed how grace united human nature to become "divine by grace", in contrast to Christ, who was divine by nature. Yet Christ is an example to us, and theological arguments against the division of the two natures in Christ were intended also to deny the division of man and God and affirm the ultimate union of human nature with divinity. The constant statement, "*What is not assumed, cannot be deified*", had in mind both the deification of the human nature of Christ and the divinization of the whole human person. Human divinization, however, though a process begun here, cannot be consummated until the world to come, when God shall be all in all.[44]

On the other side, in the *East*, the Christian experience of God was characterized by *light* rather than darkness. The Greeks evolved a different form of mysticism, which is also found world-wide. This did not depend on imagery and vision but rested on the apophatic or silent experience described by Denys the Areopagite. They naturally eschewed all rationalistic conceptions of God. As Gregory of Nyssa had explained in his Commentary on the Song of Songs, "every concept grasped by the mind becomes an obstacle in the quest to those who search." The aim of the contemplative was to go beyond ideas and also beyond all images whatsoever, since these could only be a distraction. Then he would acquire

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[43] John B. O'CONNOR, *The Sacred writings of St John of Damascus*, Jazbee Verlag Jürgen Beck, Altenmünster. Germany, p. 137.

[44] Vladimir LOSSKY, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, London: James Clarke & Co., 1957, pp. 126, 154, 196.

> "A certain sense of presence' that was indefinable and certainly transcended all human experiences of a relationship with another person."[45]

This attitude was called *hesychia*, "tranquility" or 'interior silence". Since words, ideas and images can only tie us down in the mundane world, in the here and now, the mind must be deliberately stilled by the techniques of concentration, so that it could cultivate a waiting silence. Only then could it hope to apprehend a Reality that transcended anything that it could conceive.

How was it possible to know an incomprehensible God? The Greeks loved that kind of paradox and the *hesychasts* turned to the old distinction between God's essence (ousia) and his 'energies' (energeiai) or activities in the world, which enabled us to experience something of the divine. Since we could never know God as he is in himself, it was the 'energies' not the 'essence' that we experienced in prayer. They could be described as the 'rays' of divinity, which illuminated the world and were an outpouring of the divine, but as distinct from God himself as sunbeams were distinct from the sun. They manifested a God who was utterly silent and unknowable. As St Basil the Great had said:

> "It is by his energies that we know our God; we do not assent that we come near to the essence itself, for his energies descend to us but his essence remains unapproachable."[46]

In the Old Testament, this divine energy had been called God's "glory". In the New Testament, it had shone forth in the person of Christ on Mount Tabor, when his humanity had been transfigured by the divine rays. Now they penetrated the whole created universe and deified those who had been saved. As the word "energeiai" (ενεργειαι) implied, this was an active and dynamic conception of God. Where the West would see God making himself known by means of his eternal attributes – his goodness, justice, love and omnipotence –, the Greeks saw God making himself accessible in a ceaseless activity in which he was somehow present.

When we experienced the "energies" in prayer, therefore, we were in some sense communing with God directly, even though the unknowable reality itself remained in obscurity. The leading hesychast *Evagrius Ponticus* (d. 599) insisted that the 'knowledge' that we had of God in prayer had nothing whatever to do with concepts or images but was an immediate experience of the divine which transcended these. It was important, therefore, for hesychasts to strip their souls naked:

> "When you are praying," he told his monks, "do not shape within yourself any image of the deity and do not let your mind be shaped by the impress of any form." Instead, they should "approach the Immaterial in an immaterial manner".[47]

Evagrius was proposing a sort of Christian Yoga. This was not a process of reflection; indeed, "prayer means the shedding of thought".[48] It was rather an intuitive apprehension of God. It will result in a sense of the unity of all things, a freedom from distraction and multiplicity, and the loss of ego - an experience that is clearly akin to that produced by

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[45] GREGORY of Nyssa, *Homilies on the Song of Songs. (Writings from the Greco-Roman World, Band 13)*, 6, transl. with an Introduction and Notes by Richard A. NORRIS Jr., Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.

[46] St BASIL the Great, *Epistle* 234.1, apud Karen ARMSTRONG, *A History of God*: *The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Paperback, The Random House Publishing Group, New York, 1993, p. 223.

[47] EVAGRIUS Ponticus, *On Prayer*, 67, in *Filocalia sfintelor nevoinţe ale desăvârşirii* (*Philokalia of the holy struggles of perfection*), vol. 1, transl., Introduction and notes by Rev. Dumitru Staniloae, Harisma, Bucharest, 1992, p. 82.

[48] *Ibid*, 71, p. 83.

contemplatives in non-theistic religions like Buddhism. By systematically weaning their minds away from their 'passions' – such as pride, greed, sadness or anger which tied them to the ego – hesychasts would transcend themselves and become deified like Jesus on Mount Tabor, transfigured by the divine energies.

The goal of Orthodox Christian mysticism is the union of man with God in Christ. But since God is endless, the goal of uniting with Him, of our perfection, never corresponds to an end from which we can no longer advance. All Eastern Fathers agree that perfection has no end, but is a furtherance "from glory to glory" (II Cor. 3.18), or the *epektasis* St. Gregory of Nazianzus are talking about. To characterize this union the term used in the East is that of deification or participation in divinity ("partakers of the divine nature," II Peter 1.4). This destiny of man, who lives godly, but not by himself, but by participation – a distinction that prevents us from understanding the union in pantheistic terms – is expressed by the axiom of St. Athanasius the Great: "God has become man, so that man becomes God". The destiny of man in Christianity is to achieve the status of Christ by way of *likeness*, that is, an adoptive son of God, or to become God, not by identification but through *participation* into divine nature. This union always maintains in Orthodox theology a theandric character.[49]

The climax of spiritual life is the state of the believer, elevated above the level of his powers, not by himself, but through the work of the Holy Spirit. "Our mind comes out of itself and thus gets united with God, in which manner has become above mind," says St. Gregory Palamas.[50] During the vision of God, the mind overcomes itself and all its mental works receive a work of God. For through God this power of mind passes from potency into the act.

The union with God or the mystical path is seen differently in Eastern and Western theology. Both, of course, talk about the three phases of spiritual life, called differently, according to the Church writer from whom it was borrowed. Thus, Dionysius the Areopagite speaks of three great phases: *purification* (καθαρσις), *illumination* (φωτισμος) and *perfection* (τελειωσις) or *union*. In the West, Thomas Aquinas, one of Dionysius's numerous commentators, calls them *via purgativa, via iluminativa*, and *via unitiva*, appointments that all scholastic adopted. According to both St. Maximus the Confessor and Nikita Stithatos' nomenclature, the hierarchy of the development of spiritual life is divided into: απαθεια (impassion, insensibility), θεωρια (view, contemplation), and θεολογια, which refers to τελειωσις (perfection) or to θεωσις (deification). Both Greek terminology, highlighted by St. Maximus the Confessor, and scholastic terminology, invariably refer to the same three Dionysian functions and determine the same three phases of spiritual life.[51] The first two phases of *cleansing* or *depassioning*, which require a prolonged exercise constitute the Christian Ascetics, while the third one – the Mystic Theology, that is, *par excellence*, the science of man deification.

The distinction between the two great theologies appears when one takes into discussion the way of attaining deification or union of man with God. The meaning of union is perverted where there is a tendency towards the identification between man and God, that

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[49] Dr. Alexandru-Corneliu ARION, *Panteismul hinduist şi învăţătura creştină despre Dumnezeu* (*Hindu pantheism and the Christian teaching on God*), Enciclopedică Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010, pp. 437-438.
[50] Sf. GRIGORIE Palama, apud Pr. prof. dr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Viaţa şi învăţătura Sfântului Grigorie Palama* (*The Life and Teaching of St. Gregory Palamas*), 2ⁿᵈ ed., Scripta, Bucureşti, 1993, p. 52.
[51] Nichifor CRAINIC, *Sfinţenia – Împlinirea Umanului* (Holiness - Human Fulfillment), *Curs de Teologie Mistică* (Mystical Theology Lecture), hierodeacon Teodosie Paraschiv, ed., Trinitas, Iaşi, 1993, pp. 81-83.

is to say, to an update in the consciousness of an identity that would exist substantially in advance, as it is the case with Hindu pantheism. That is why some Protestant theologians – who understand by the mysterious union with God this identification exclusively – reject, *de principio*, any mysterious union, falling into the opposite extreme, i.e. of the irreducible separation between man and God[52], and that's also because the Reformation has repudiated the Holy Sacraments. Moreover, in *Protestant theology* – from Albrecht Ritschl onwards –, it is believed that mysticism is possible only in a pantheistic view of God. It involves the dissolution of the human person into the divine substance of the cosmos. Consequently, mysticism is defined as:

> "that form of the relationship with God in which world and human self are radically negated, and human personality gets dissolved, sinks into the infinite One of God." That is why a conclusion so foreign to the genuine Christian personalism has been reached: "A person-to-person relationship in which both persons remain cannot be thought of as of mystic nature."[53]

In fact, from the traditional protestant point of view, there is uncertainty concerning such a thing as Christian mystical theology. There are many – and not only Protestants – who argue that the question cannot be raised; yet the phenomenon seems persistent, however impossible. The stimulus of a book called *The Protestant Mystics* was the categorical assertion that 'there are no Protestant mystics".[54]

Unlike the West, in which, through *deism*, the direct connection with God got lost, by denying the teaching of St. Gregory Palamas about uncreated energies, the Orthodox theology consistently maintained that the Holy Spirit is present not only in the Church – from the day of Pentecost –, but also within the creation, from the beginning of the world, because all things were created *by* the Father, *in* the Son, *through* the Holy Spirit. The light that appeared in the universe before the stars and the sun, as the ideal original matter, which constitutes all the potentials of the created existence, is the created energy sprung out from the uncreated energy of the Spirit, Who walks over the waters at the moment of creation. Based on the work of the Holy Spirit, both in the Church and in the universe, Orthodox theology speaks of the transfiguration of cosmos and man *in* Christ, seen simultaneously as Creator Logos and Redeemer Logos. Thus, one of the absolutely peculiar dimensions of Eastern spirituality is the belief that matter can be transfigured, that it can be sanctified and even deified. Thus, Christ's redemptive work is interpreted in this *ontological* meaning.[55]

For Orthodox theology, the energies or divine works are uncreated; they belong to the nature of God, but through them the Persons are to be revealed. It is so that by divine and deifying grace, as divine energy, man can reach at perfect communion with the Creator, while preserving however his personal identity. In «unio mystica», God is the one who takes the initiative, descending on the "thread" of the uncreated energies in the man meeting, in

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[52] Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Ascetica şi Mistica Ortodoxă* (*Ascetics and Orthodox Mysticism*), vol. 1: *Ascetics*, Deisis, Alba Iulia, 1993, p. 16.

[53] P. Feine, *Der Apostel Paulus. Das Ringen um das geschichtliche Verständnis des Paulus,* Bertelsmann, Gütersloh, 1927, apud Mitropolitul Nicolae MLADIN, *Asceza şi mistica paulină* (*Pauline asceticism and mysticism*), Ed. and *Preface* by Pr. prof. dr. Ioan Ică, Deisis, Sibiu, 1996, p. 57.

[54] Anne FREMANTLE and W. H. AUDEN, *The Protestant Mystics*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1964, p. vii.

[55] Alexandru-Corneliu ARION, *Hindu pantheism and the Christian teaching on God*, p. 446. Through Incarnation, Sacrifice, Resurrection, and Ascension to Heaven, Christ has transfigured His own Body in order to make it – through the Holy Spirit – a means of irradiation and transfiguration of man and creation into the Church.

order to lifting him up to communion with Him, on the path of infinite spiritual progress in Christ and in the Church, through the Holy Spirit.

Viewed in itself, human nature does not become *one* with divinity, according to the Being. But along with divinity, "it also turns into godhead"; "it no longer remains in its boundaries and attributes." However this is only happening after the Resurrection, and not through being,[56] but by divine grace, as uncreated energy of God.

CONCLUSION

Unlike what is usually believed, the tension between the mystical and the anti-mystical is not absent even from the Eastern Fathers. Like monasticism, mysticism is not a religious phenomenon peculiar to Christianity, and it is disputed whether it is essential to Christianity at all. But it can be characterized as a search for and experience of immediacy with God. The mystic is not content to know about God, he longs for union with God. 'Union with God' can mean different things, from literal identity, where the mystic loses all sense of himself and is absorbed into God, to the union that is experienced as the consummation of love, in which the lover and the beloved remain intensely aware both of themselves and of the other.[57] How the mystics interpret the way and the goal of their quest depends on what they think about God, and that itself is influenced by what they experience: it is a mistake to try to make out that all mysticism is the same.[58] Yet the search for God, or the ultimate, for His own sake, and an unwillingness to be satisfied with anything less than Him; the search for immediacy with this object of the soul's longing: this would seem to be the heart of mysticism.[59]

The model of Hindu ontological identity, Christianity opposes the model of personal transfiguration, through the continuous elongation of the person in God, realization possible only from the perspective of divine uncreated energies. God is not present with His being in the space that He created, but by plasticizing the reasons of creation, He constitutes the latter as an organic whole, harmonious in himself, which He sustains through His will. Unlike the ontological identity between God and the creature of Hindu perspective, the Christian mysticism of the Eastern Church postulates the eternally ontological difference between man and God.[60]

In Hindu theology, the union with Brahman is given, but it must also be realized consciously through the salvific gnosis. The process of union in Hinduism is accomplished by removing the veil of ignorance (māya), that is, by knowing that the world is illusory, by the act of consciousness that man is essentially, always, identical to God. The knowledge (jñāna), obtained through meditative contemplation, is the path of mysticism in Hinduism. Once unity with God is given, it must only be consciously accomplished by removing the illusion that man would not be one with God-Brahman. The state of union is at the disposal of the ascetic, who has withdrawn from the world and lives only for contemplation.

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[56] Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Ascetics and Orthodox Mysticism,* vol. 2: *Mysticism,* p. 200.

[57] Andrew LOUTH, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition. From Plato to Denys*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. xiv.

[58] The literature on this subject is vast, but see in particular: R.C. ZAEHNER, *Mysticism Sacred and Profane. An Inquiry into some varieties of Praeternatural Experience*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, London, 1957.

[59] Andrew LOUTH, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*,

[60] Alexandru-Corneliu ARION, *Hindu pantheism and the Christian teaching on God*, p. 448.

The ultimate deification will consist, as Father Stăniloae has put it, into a look and experience of all the thought of and irradiated divine values and energies, to the ultimate measure of man, before Christ. But in doing so, in front of every human being, through the reasons and energies gathered within him, will be reflected the logoi (reasons) and energies of the Logos. That is why eternal happiness will consist in the contemplation of the face of Christ (Rev. 22. 4).[61]

The whole process can be synthesized by the statement of the St Maximus the Confessor:

> "God has made us so that we may become partakers of the divine nature, so that we may enter into eternity in order to appear in likeness with Him, being deified by the grace that produces all the existing beings and calls to existence everything that does not exist."[62]

In this way, Christianity is uniquely established into a religion that, although it appears in history, transcends this history into a meta-history, because it is founded on the sacrifice of the Son of God Incarnate. This fully divine and human condition, at the same time, of his Founder, is absolutely specific to Christianity, and by this it is radically different not only from the Hindu religion, but also from any extra-Christian religious experience.

Finally, what we find in the Eastern Fathers undermines any tendency towards seeing mysticism as an elite, individualist quest for 'peak' experience'; rather for them the 'mystical life' is the "life with Christ hid in God" of Colossians 3.3, a life which is ecclesial, that is lived in the Body of Christ, which is nourished liturgically, and which is certainly a matter of experience, though not of extraordinary "experiences".[63] The mystical life, the 'theoretical' life, is what we experience when we are caught up in the contemplation of Christ, when, in that contemplation, we come to know 'face to face' and, as the Apostle Paul puts it, "know, even as I am known" (1 Cor. 13.12).

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[3] ARMSTRONG, Karen, *A History of God*: *The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Paperback, The Random House Publishing Group, New York, 1993.
[4] BISHOP, Donald H., ed., *Mysticism and the Mystical Experience: East and West*, London and Toronto, 1995.
[5] BOWES, Pratima, "Mysticism in the Upanishads and in Śaṅkara's Vedānta", in *The Yogi and the Mystic. Studies in Indian and comparative Mysticism*, Karel WERNER, ed., Durham Indological Series No.1, Curzon Press Ltd., 1994.
[6] CRAINIC, Nichifor, *Sfinţenia – Împlinirea Umanului* (*Holiness - Human Fulfillment*), *Curs de Teologie Mistică* (Mystical Theology Lecture), hierodeacon Teodosie Paraschiv, ed., Trinitas, Iaşi, 1993.
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[61] Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Ascetics and Orthodox Mysticism*, vol. 2, pp. 205-206.
[62] Sf. MAXIM Mărturisitorul, *Epist. 43, Ad. Ioannem cubicularium,* P.G., t. 91, col. 640 B, apud Vladimir LOSSKY, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p. 117.
[63] Andrew LOUTH, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, p. 213.

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[30] _____. *Ascetica şi Mistica Ortodoxă* (*Ascetics and Orthodox Mysticism*), vol. 1: *Ascetics*, vol. 2: *Mysticism*, Deisis, Alba Iulia, 1993.

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[33] WOODS, Richard, editor, *Understanding Mysticism*, Garden City, New York, 1980.

[34] ZAEHNER, R.C., *Hinduism*, Oxford University Press, London, 1966.

[35] _____. *Hindu Scriptures*, London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1978; rpt. Everyman's Library, David Campbell Publishers LTD, 1992.

[36] _____. *Mysticism Sacred and Profane. An Inquiry into some varieties of Praeternatural Experience*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, London, 1957.

EMMANUEL LEVINAS ON HOSPITALITY: ETHICAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

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Walls
Without reflection, without mercy, without shame,
they built strong walls and high, and compassed me about.
And now I sit here and consider and despair.
My brain is worn with meditating on my fate:
I had outside so many things to terminate.
Oh! why when they were building did I not beware!
But never a sound of building, never an echo came.
Out of the world, insensibly, they shut me out.
C. P. Cavafy
(Translated from the Greek by J. C. Cavafy)

ABSTRACT

The current refugee crisis poses the crucial question of hospitality [or hos(ti)pitality in Derridean terms] as the complex ethico-political question of welcoming the stranger in a globalized world. For Emmanuel Levinas, hospitality means ethical and by extension political responsibility for the absolute Other. Without doubt, this is the quintessence of the Levinasian ethical and political thought. It is noteworthy that this sui generis metaphysical ethics does not concern conventional moralism or charity either in the case of personal ethics or in the case of political ethics. In both cases, it chiefly concerns the foundation of world as a refugium, i.e. a threshold of unconditional justice. In a nutshell, this article try in the final analysis to indicate the critical fact, according to Emmanuel Levinas's ethical argumentation, that a public policy on refugee question should mainly be determined by the ethics of hospitality in the sense of the pure welcoming of the absolute Other. Undoubtedly, this form of ethico-political justice is worthy of the name.
Keywords: hospitality, generosity, sanctity, responsibility, exile, political theology;

INTRODUCTION: LOVE, GENEROSITY, OTHERNESS

In Emmanuel Levinas, *hospitality* (hospitalité) is essentially identified with the ambiguity of love and is embodied in the undoubtedly paradoxical and always intense relationship of the one beloved with the one who loves. Hospitality, as the metaphysical incidence of transcendence, as the spectral phenomenology of exteriority itself, ultimately as the welcoming of the Other man, resides in the language of desire, and as a transcendent speech is associated with love. Love, therefore, goes to the Other man, leading hence to immanence (the Spinozian *conatus essendi*). From this Levinasian point of view, love for fellow human beings as a hospitality and welcoming of the Other involves the element of ambiguity, to the extent that it is placed between immanence and transcendence. In this

sense, hospitality, as defined by the fellow friend and student (lato sensu) of Emmanuel Levinas (and of course, loving person at the same time), Jacques Derrida, may well be understood as the Platonic Khôra (this announcement of the Other man - this imminent stranger), as a sui generis place that is and constantly subject to coming (à venir), without, however, actually bearing a hypostasis, such as the coming Godot, by Samuel Beckett. Reasonably so, Jacques Derrida decided, in order to demonstrate this radical ambiguity of love/hospitality, to name this place with the paradox term *hostipitality* (hostipitalité)[1].

The Levinasian beloved is not simply a lost human soul, but the stranger per se, in whose transcendence is structurally inherent, as a negative ontology or negative immanence, the human state of strangeness itself as an erotic desire to the Other. In contrast, however, to the conventional Freudian *libido,* which is purely of a biological nature and is rushed by the loving person to the object of desire (where the Other as a fallen angel is finally and irrevocably depersonalized), the Levinasian erotic desire of hospitality, welcoming of the stranger, of the strangeness, is a particularly ethical relationship, where love is directed, paradoxically, inversely and therefore unconventionally, from the beloved one to the loving person (this paradox of hostipitality), reversing the terms of the erotic game in a way that, as Jacques Derrida claims[2], the host/loving person becomes ultimately a *hostage* (otage) to the love of the beloved/visitor stranger, canceling destructively every prospect of possessive possession. Through this powerful Levinasian point of view, the beloved always remains, as Abi Doukhan points out, *verginal* and permanently out of range and thus in an infinite exile[3]. As a first conclusion here, with the very words of Emmanuel Levinas, we can say that hospitality/erotic desire is always in ''an interminable movement toward a future never future enough''[4].

For many special scholars of Levinasian ethical thinking, this explosive concept of hospitality is a function of Jewish exile. Emmanuel Levinas himself was a stranger throughout his life on a foreign land (at the same time a violent and promised land). A strange Camus-like guest/stranger, who loved those who hosted him, but without never renouncing his Jewishness (that is, his strangeness) through religious assimilation. The guest/stranger, reminding us all that although we are living together on this earth, we come from somewhere out there - from a Khôra of transcendence and exteriority. If we accept this Levinasian *amor mundi* (according to Hannah Arendt)[5], then the world does not belong to anyone. We are strangers/visitors of a residence we are called to love, without ever really desire it, and without having to suffer at the same time the violence of possession and possessiveness. It is really well known that the philosophical view that man is an exile and

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[1] Jacques Derrida, ''Hostipitality'', in: *Angelaki. Journal of the theoretical humanities*, No. 3, Vol. 5 (2000), pp. 3-18; Spiros Makris, ''Politics, Ethics and Strangers in the 21st Century. Fifteen critical reflections on Jacques Derrida's concept of hos(ti)pitality'', in: *Theoria & Praxis. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Thought*, No. 1, Vol. 5 (2017), pp. 1-21.

[2] Spiros Makris, ''Jacques Derrida and the Case of Cosmopolitanism: ´Cities of Refuge´ in the Twenty-First Century'', In: Darren O'Byrne and Sybille De La Rosa (eds), *The Cosmopolitan Ideal. Challenges and Opportunities*, Rowman & Littlefield International, Ltd., London, 2015, pp. 177-194.

[3] Abi Doukhan, *Emmanuel Levinas. A Philosophy of Exile*, London, Bloomsbury, N. Delhi, New York, Sydney, 2014, p. 5.

[4] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, The Hague, Boston, London, 1979, p. 254.

[5] Spiros Makris, ''Aristotle in Hannah Arendt's Republicanism. From homo faber to homo politicus'', in: *Annuaire International Des Droits De L' Homme*, 2015-2016, Issy-les-Moulineaux Cedex, Paris: L.G.D.J. lextensoéditions, Volume IX (2017), pp. 535-563.

stranger in the world comes from the Gnostics. This concept of, sometimes frightening, earthly *thrownness* (Geworfenheit) and loneliness will transform, from the late Antiquity to Martin Heidegger in the 20th century, into a basic pattern of phenomenological ontology and existentialism. The American sociologist Richard Sennett argues that the city/world is a foreign society; a place/shelter where strangers meet[6]. Hospitality is, by definition, a temporary shelter[7]. Hospitality, as an ambiguous love/hostageship, is for Levinas essentially a philosophy of exile, without beginning and end. In other words, it is a hymn to strangeness as ethics and *human condition* (again in Arendtian terms)[8].

Emmanuel Levinas likens this residence as a place where *intimacy* dominates. To the extent that exteriority is not, as he brilliantly emphasizes, the spatial space, this movement of hospitality in/out, like Martin Buber's in-between field (which was also exploited by Hannah Arendt as world/public sphere), shows that the strangeness starts from an intimacy, which, however, in turn always opens out. Thus hospitality looks like the Levinasian *visage* with *double face*, where the inside and the outside lose their commonplace spatial structure and are transformed into the endless erotic desire of hospitality, which eventually with an extraordinary feminist reversal, Emmanuel Levinas identifies with feminine otherness. Hospitality is *feminini generis:* that is, the residence of the eternal stranger is defined as *femininity.* The woman, as the dimension of interiority par excellence*,* opens, in terms of Martin Heidegger, the transcendence through the ambiguous hospitality/love, as an erotic game that is not entrapped in the narcissistic and hysterical libidinal economy of the Freudian oedipus complex, but outflanking the Lacanian Name of the Father and of power as violence and barbarism, escapes to this intermediate residence; in this refuge, where the symbolic power of the language, which submits the desire of the transcendent relationship with the Other man in the reification of the erotic desire, i.e. in the sexual object, crumbles, like the Lacanian mirror (the mirror stage), in front of the Levinasian *face to face ethics*, where this Other is definitely an ambiguous beloved/loving person stranger[9].

Emmanuel Levinas ultimately rescues the strangeness through hospitality, though naively some have argued that with this paradoxical metaphysical ethics, he alienates the humans once and for all. As Abi Doukhan emphasizes, the Levinasian concept of hospitality is a hymn to otherness[10], which, although we desire earnestly, we can never acquire as a simple sexual object, which we have, for example, through capitalism, devalued and prostituted entirely. Only when we can comprehend, in these terms of Emmanuel Levinas, our lasting and endless exile in the world, in a world that we desire deeply but it does not belong to us, only then we will be able to grasp in-depth and thoughtfully the ethical meaning of hospitality, in the sense of a generosity[11], which undoubtedly has many features in common with the notion of unconditional *gift* to Derrida[12]. The world therefore ceases to exist as a set of possessions and conquests, as it exists, mainly, through the narrative of

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[6] Richard Sennet, *The Fall of Public Man*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York & London, 1992, p. 47.

[7] Spiros Makris, ''Jacques Derrida and the Case of Cosmopolitanism: ´Cities of Refuge´ in the Twenty-First Century'', In: Darren O'Byrne and Sybille De La Rosa (eds), *The Cosmopolitan Ideal. Challenges and Opportunities*, pp. 177-194.

[8] Abi Doukhan, *Emmanuel Levinas. A Philosophy of Exile*, pp. 13-14.

[9] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*, pp. 152-155.

[10] Abi Doukhan, *Emmanuel Levinas. A Philosophy of Exile*, p. 32.

[11] Abi Doukhan, *Emmanuel Levinas. A Philosophy of Exile*, p. 34.

[12] Simon Morgan Wortham, *The Derrida Dictionary*, Continuum, London and New York, 2010, pp. 63-65.

cultural imperialism and Orientalism[13], and becomes an intermediate field of welcoming and hospitality of the Other. The world can only be understood as the *ultimum remedium* of the Other. The world does not belong to anyone exclusively because every moment, especially the moments of humanitarian crisis and long exile, it belongs to the stranger, to this always coming Other[14].

It is no coincidence that Emmanuel Levinas in the Preface of his seminal work *Totality and Infinity* sums up, almost aphoristically, as follows: ''This book will present subjectivity as welcoming the Other, as hospitality; in it the idea of infinity is consummated. Hence intentionality, where thought remains an *adequation* with the object, does not define consciousness at its fundamental level. All knowing qua intentionality already presupposes the idea of infinity, which is preeminently *non-adequation*''[15]. The Levinasian hospitality, supplanting the barrier of immanence, brings to the world the miracle of the idea of infinity as an overflow of exile in every corner of the earth. The hospitality, as an ethics of the welcoming of the Other, tends for Emmanuel Levinas to become the very work of justice[16], or, as Jacques Derrida repeated on the day of his funeral, the work of mourning for the friendship and the transcendence of the stranger itself[17]. We must not forget that in 1996, one year after Levinas's death, Jacques Derrida transubstantiated this *work of mourning*, as a lecture in Sorbonne for his friend and teacher Emmanuel Levinas (this eternal Socratic stranger: ''Sometimes the foreigner is Socrates himself''[18]), in a process of the welcoming of the Other and the hospitality[19]. Here, now, Derrida refers to a *politics of hospitality*, inaugurating not only his own political turn (the late phase of his work: 1996-2004), which was captured in 1997 in his great essay on cosmopolitanism[20], but also a process for a political reading of the Levinasian ethics of hospitality as a philosophy of exile on the residence of femininity that is of mother-earth[21].

1. PROXIMITY, SANCTITY, RESPONSIBILITY

The feminist and ecological readings of Levinasian hospitality bring to light the political Levinas. Hospitality is not just an ethical category in Levinasian thinking, but also the vehicle or, more appropriately, *the passage* to enter the political field. The welcoming of the Other (or the Other man) is thus displaced from the field of femininity to the field of politics. Enrique Dussel argues that this Levinasian politics of hospitality (to use again Jacques Derrida's cherished term) is, if anything else, a *liberating act*[22]. As Abi Doukhan points out[23], the act of hospitality constitutes for Emmanuel Levinas the transition from the ethical to the political. Consequently, here too we have a significant finding in the relevant

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[13] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, Vintage Books Edition, New York, 1994; Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage Books, New York, 1994.

[14] Abi Doukhan, *Emmanuel Levinas. A Philosophy of Exile*, p. 35.

[15] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*, p. 27.

[16] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*, p. 28.

[17] Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1999.

[18] Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality. Anne Dufourmantelle invites Derrida to respond*, Stanford California Press, Stanford, California, 2000, p. 13.

[19] Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, p. 15.

[20] Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, Routledge, London and New York, 2001.

[21] Emmanuel Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, The Athlone Press, London, 1999, p. 18.

[22] Enrique Dussel, '''Politics´ by Levinas: Towards a Critical Political Philosophy'', in: Asher Horowitz and Gad Horowitz (ed.), *Difficult Justice: Commentaries on Levinas and Politics*, University of Toronto Press. Toronto, 2006, p. 80.

[23] Abi Doukhan, *Emmanuel Levinas. A Philosophy of Exile*, p. 38.

bibliography on the political Levinas, the crucial link between ethics and politics is not the Levinasian third person/*the Third* (Tiers)[24], as many special scholars perceive the presence of multiplicity in interpersonal relationships[25], but the stranger. In this regard, the danger lies in the fact that through the Third, through justice in other words, that we owe to people beyond our neighbor, politics can be absorbed by ontology, totality and Totalitarianism. The Third, thus, while appearing in Levinasian phenomenology in order to implement the question of justice, at the same time, putting a limitation on the occurrence of *proximity,* it actually puts at risk the very act of hospitality as a constitutional expression of face-to-face ethics. For Levinas, politics always involves the element of violence. In order to avoid this possible ugly development, which historically led to the crisis of modernity, the French Jewish philosopher refers to a *new politics*[26], where the transition takes place without the disruption of the ethics of proximity. On the contrary, this new Levinasian politics, which in essence marks the rejection of the Hobbesian liberal modern state, is based on the field of strangeness or, otherwise, as an experiential continuity with the ultimate ethical act or act of hospitality, with the act of ethical encounter with the face of the Other. In contrast to the liberal and capitalist politics of possession and conquer in the world, which by definition is a weak, imperfect and fragile form of society, Emmanuel Levinas, in the sense of a new politics, does not face the highest moment of justice and of the law as a break with the field of ethics, but as a continuation of ethics or, as Abi Doukhan writes aptly, as a tangible trace of the *anarchical moment of ethics*[27].

It is obvious, therefore, that the Levinasian new politics is a direct function of the hospitality, of the stranger and even of the eternal and endless exile of the man in the world. While the Hobbesian political society is formed by excluding the stranger, the political society of Emmanuel Levinas is articulated around the question of the strangeness[28]. For the French Jewish thinker, hospitality is the only and unique political and social bond that can highlight what Anya Topolski defines as a Levinasian *ethical politics*[29]. To understand sufficiently, this complete reversal of politics of modernity on the part of Levinas, and hence the political dimension of hospitality, it must be placed within the framework of the Levinasian new politics that we could, like Howard Caygill, define as *politics of anarchy* or political anarchy[30]. Levinas lays anarchy as an ethics beyond and before politics; as an act of the trace and resistance to Totalitarianism, which is aimed outside the conventional power field of modern state sovereignty, in the Khôra of exteriority, where the stranger bothers and disturbs the totality as an exteriority of anarchy[31].

If the *Otherwise than Being or beyond essence (Autrement qu'être ou au-dela de l' essence)* came as a follow-up to the *Totality and Infinity* to explore something further, then it is not but this situation beyond that of the Heideggerian ontological Being, there, in the field of interpersonal ethics, where the Other cannot be incorporated into the Self and in the Same;

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[24] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*, p. 57.
[25] William Paul Simmons, ''The Third. Levinas' theoretical move from an-archical ethics to the realm of justice and politics'', in: *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, No. 6, Vol. 25 (1999), pp. 83-104.
[26] Emmanuel Levinas, *Beyond the Verse*, Continuum, London and New York, 2007, p. 180.
[27] Abi Doukhan, *Emmanuel Levinas. A Philosophy of Exile*, p. 38.
[28] Abi Doukhan, *Emmanuel Levinas. A Philosophy of Exile*, p. 38.
[29] Anya Topolski, *Arendt, Levinas and a Politics of Relationality*, Rowman & Littlefield International, London & New York, 2015, p. 145.
[30] Howard Caygill, *Levinas & the Political*, Routledge, London & New York, 2002, p. 138.
[31] Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, Boston, London, 1997, p. 99.

where the alien and disturbing characteristics of the face of the Other man cannot be assimilated and neutralized in any way. From this point of view, the Levinasian hospitality as a new politics reveals through the absolute exteriority the ethical awakening of singularity towards the otherness, which is the prospect of a strong and prudent social bond[32]. So if the Third means the neutralization of the Other in the Hobbesian modern state, the stranger illuminates the way of a chance to achieve an ethical politics. This heretical reading of Abi Doukhan actually preserves the quintessence of the Levanasian ethics of the stranger from the risk of absorbing the Third within the authoritative universe of a, if anything else, typical legal system that does not tolerate the strangeness as a rule of justice but attempts, with what Jacques Derrida names as *force de loi* (force of law)[33], a balancing leveling of the otherness. When Derrida emphasizes that law is not justice, he obviously means this incalculable element of the infinite hospitality of this Other that comes from far away, beyond the Being (the Levinasian metaphysical ethics as the first philosophy), that we can never exclude, but never assimilate and transform it into a property and object of possession. For Levinas, Jacques Derrida clarifies, this infinite law is not the man in general, but the Other man; the stranger; the absolute stranger; this, in other words, that falls outside of all proportionality, since he conveys the absolute asymmetry of the face. This infinite hospitality is characterized by Levinas once as *Jewish humanism*[34] and sometimes as *sanctity* (holiness, sainteté)[35].

The Levinasian act of hospitality as a fulfillment of society is essentially an act of generosity: hospitality as a gift and *vice versa*, which, however, to the extent that it aims at an ethical politics, is not built in coexistence with the Other, but at the welcoming of exile. The world is given as a gift to the Other man. As soon as its face appears, the act of hospitality immediately becomes an unconditional gift of the world, a process of generosity. The politics of hospitality in this way in Emmanuel Levinas is implied as a politics of generosity. The political and social bond is based on a liberating act in which the Same is redeemed by the narcissism of singularity and spreading beyond the Being in the Platonic Khôra of transcendence, without preconditions and without expectations, only as a risky jump, chasing the miracle of a common world, a public sphere that does not belong absolutely to anyone, because all the tenants are by definition strangers. In the Levinasian politics of hospitality, immanence and transcendence, inside and outside, I and Thou[36], the Same and the Other, the host and the guest, the native and the stranger, are losing henceforth their conventional content, setting up a world-threshold, a favorite term of Jacques Derrida and Giorgio Agamben[37], where, at the same time, at the very same topological point, we come and go as hosts and guests by treaty, but essentially as endlessly strangers, i.e. exiles continuously, and, in the Cavafy's way, forgotten: ''*Out of the world, insensibly, they shut me out*''.

Consequently, the political constitutes for Emmanuel Levinas a public space we share as strangers in the same world. Without implying the coexistence or assimilation,

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[32] Abi Doukhan, *Emmanuel Levinas. A Philosophy of Exile*, p. 42.

[33] Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, Routledge, London and New York, 2010, p. 228.

[34] Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom. Essays on Judaism*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1990, p. 273.

[35] B. C. Hutchens, *Levinas. A Guide for the Perplexed*, Continuum, London and New York, 2004, p. 112.

[36] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, Bloomsbury, London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney, 2013.

[37] Spiros Makris, ''Jacques Derrida and the Case of Cosmopolitanism: ´Cities of Refuge´ in the Twenty-First Century'', In: Darren O'Byrne and Sybille De La Rosa (eds), *The Cosmopolitan Ideal. Challenges and Opportunities*, pp. 177-194.

without eliminating differences and contradictions, the political in the new Levinasian politics is a pluralistic and explicitly open system of foreign and innumerable faces, who appear on the threshold of the world or on the world-threshold, in order to put the process of generosity on the ground[38]. Hospitality as generosity finally establishes the Levinasian political world as a liberating act, that is, as an act of self-undermining of the Ego. This *difficult freedom* of the subject, according to the title of Emmanuel Levinas' book[39], constitutes a widening of the sublime in the Being, bringing to the field of politics the miracle of accountability and absolute *responsibility* (responsabilité) towards the face of the Other. The politics of hospitality and generosity is now set as a politics of absolute responsibility face-to-face in the absolute strangeness: to the absolute Other. Paraphrasing the French Jewish thinker, it can be argued that the Ego before the Other is infinitely responsible. Not only the poverty and the impoverishment of the Other concern me, but nothing that happens to this Stranger can leave me indifferent. The Ego conquers its highest existential rank just interested for everyone and for everything. Caring for the other person is the lever for the transformation of the dominion of the Same from the self-power to responsibility. But taking on the encumbrance of the Other implies, at the same time, its deeper recognition that puts him higher than me[40]. This is undoubtedly a definition of politics, the political and citizen that challenges, perhaps, as inadequate even the most radical republican projects of late modernity.

2. HOMELAND, WORLD, EXILE

Although the Levinasian concept of hospitality is a function of the long Jewish exile, the ethical and political connotations of strangeness compose a first philosophy where the Being is not revealed from now on as an ontological hinterland of the subject, but as the very human state of responsibility towards the Other man, the neighbor, especially the stranger[41]. The Levinasian hospitality is thus understood, apart from its clear historical references (see, above all, the Jewish Exodus and Shoah), as love, generosity and responsibility before the face of the Other man, particularly in relation to mortality and his (violent) death. It is precisely this critical Levinasian meaning of hospitality that Jacques Derrida described as a work of mourning: the moment when the death of the Other blames and degrades me as Ego, highlighting the (deathly) loneliness as an endless and difficult exile which renders me a hostage of the nudity of the face as a pure otherness. So, as far as Levinas is concerned ''the other man's death calls me into question, as if, by my possible future indifference, I had become the accomplice of the death to which the other, who cannot see it, is exposed; and as if, even before vowing myself to him, I had to answer for this death of the other, and to accompany the Other in his mortal solitude. The Other becomes my neighbour precisely through the way the face summons me, calls for me, begs for me, and in so doing recalls my responsibility, and calls me into question. Responsibility for the Other, for the naked face of the first individual to come along. A responsibility that goes beyond what I may or may not have done to the Other or whatever acts I may or may not have committed, as if I were devoted to the other man before being devoted to myself. Or more exactly, as if I had to answer for the other's death even before being. A guiltless responsibility, whereby I am none the less open to an accusation of which no alibi, spatial or

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[38] Abi Doukhan, *Emmanuel Levinas. A Philosophy of Exile*, pp. 43-48.
[39] Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom. Essays on Judaism*.
[40] Emmanuel Levinas, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, Indiana University Press, USA, 1996, pp. 11-32.
[41] Emmanuel Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, p. 97.

temporal, could clear me. It is as if the other established a relationship or a relationship were established whose whole intensity consists in not presupposing the idea of community. A responsibility stemming from a time before my freedom - before my (*moi*) beginning, before any present''[42]. Nothing now is considered as natural and given.

The Levinasian hospitality upends the essentialist conventions of Western modernity, especially the atavistic fundamentalism of selfish and autistic domination and possessiveness of racism, nationalism and imperialism[43]. Through hospitality, the homeland, the world and the exile are henceforth almost related and similar concepts. ''Nothing'', emphasizes the French Jewish philosopher, in his aphoristic and sometimes staggering writing, ''is stranger or more alien than the other man, and it is in the light of utopia that one touches man outside of all rootedness and domestication. Homelessness becomes the humanity of man–and not his degradation in the forgottenness for Being and the triumph of technique. In this adventure where the I dedicates itself to the poem so as to meet the other in the non-place, it is the return that is suprising–a return based not on the response of the summoned relation, but on the circularity of the meridian–perfected trajectory of this movement without return–, which is the ´´finality without end´´ of the poetic movement. As if in going toward the other, I were reunited with myself and implanted myself in a soil that would, henceforth, be native; as if the distancing of the I drew me closer to myself, discharged of the full weight of my indetity–a movement of which poetry would be the possibility itself, and a native land which owes nothing to rootedness, nothing to ´´prior occupation´´: a native land that has no need to be a birthplace. Native land or promise land? Does it spew forth its inhabitants when they forget the course of one who goes off in search of the other. Native land on the meridian–which is to say: a *here* which also the *everywhere*, a wandering and expartation to the point of depaganisation. Is the earth habitable otherwise?''[44]

The hospitality in Emmanuel Levinas is, above all, beyond the context of Jewishness, the circular journey of strangeness in a typical native land, in a homeland without frontiers and separating lines, without rootedness, where every time we get trapped in narcissistic and arrogant forgetfulness of possession and conquer, is vomiting us in a new wandering, renewing, sometimes in a very tragic way, the perpetual circular journey of this human nomadic procession of the Benjaminian pariahs in the world. The Levinasian hospitality is the common and inevitable fate of all humans, the common destiny, to the extent that the strangeness on the supposed native land or the Promised Land is the very facticity of the *human condition*. The world is a permanent exile. The *longue durée* of Fernand Braudel. A long circle of strangeness, rootlessness and statelessness without beginning and end. Intimacy only arises through the understanding of this sui generis ethical and political condition, which makes the human freedom difficult and permanently beyond worldliness: exile, exotic, external, without limits, without margins, without borders and roots. Hospitality abolishes all forms of earthly and planetary property, opening up the Ego to the proximity of the Other.

The bond of hospitality is a highly ethical and political bond, in the sense of intimacy and proximity to the face of the Other man, that at the same time that I welcome it, I become overwhelmed by the Socratic fury of hostipitality and the corrosive ambiguity of

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[42] Emmanuel Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, Basil Blackwell (Edited by Seán Hand), Oxford, 1989, pp. 83-84.
[43] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Schocken Books, New York, 2004.
[44] Emmanuel Levinas, ''Being and the Other: On Paul Celan'', in: *Chicago Review*, No. 3, Vol. 29 (1978), pp. 16-22, pp. 19-20.

love. Bond of hospitality (or ''the institution of society'') means for Emmanuel Levinas generosity and responsibility in a circular state of endless exile and absolute risk[45]. As it is well known, the French Jewish thinker names this bond *religion*, not, of course, in the conventional sense of a relationship between God and man , but as a relation without relation: ''We propose to call ´´religion´´'', he writes in *Totality and Infinity*, ''the bond that is established between the same and the other without constituting a totality''[46].

The bond of hospitality is therefore not a holistic bond, but a relation without relation; a circular trace of interiority/exteriority, where the Hegelian bipolarity of the master/slave is continuously recycled, without polarity, being an amphoteric relationship of hostageship. Hospitality as a strangeness liberates and introduces in the field of difficult freedom. The ethics of hospitality constitutes the field of political ontology and political theology and at the same time the field of epistemology as a common truth between othernesses, beyond the Cartesian method of a cognitive subject (*cogito*), which is at the center of the world. ''The absolutely foreign alone'', says Levinas, ''can instruct us. And it is only man who could be absolutely foreign to me–refractory to every typology, to every genus, to every characterology, to every classification. [...] The strangeness of the other, his very freedom! Free beings alone can be strangers to one another. Their freedom which is ´´common´´ to them is precisely what separates them''[47], but also what unites them, according to the example of the 'table-threshold' (or the 'metaphor of the table'), as Hannah Arendt repeats many times, that at the same time and at the same point separates us and unites us[48]. The Levinasian bond of hospitality is not a common ethical and political bond, such as those who form the Hobbesian (egoism) or Lockean (consensus) social contracts of the euphemistically liberal modernity. Here, in the world-threshold, in the world-exile, at the zero point of existence, to paraphrase the famous phrase of Roland Barthes, freedom is the metonymy of strangeness, resistance, disruption and non-assimilation. Consequently, the 'joint' freedom of hospitality, of ethical and political community, or *ethical polis*, as Anya Topolski defines the Levinasian civitas[49], can ultimately only advance in an explicit and inevitable acceptance of this unconquered strangeness; as an anarchical relationship, that is, as a defiantly difficult freedom.

Strangeness leads hospitality, through the unlimited responsibility, care and justice, to a state of charity, indulgence and forgiveness[50]. This new ethical and political philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, which sometimes contradicts, as in many thinkers of the so-called Jewish renaissance in Weimar Germany (the case of Leo Strauss is probably the most indicative), Jerusalem with Athens[51], marks a new form of *sociability*[52], beyond the Aristotelian citizenship, where the bond within the city is, above all, a bond of strangeness and not of common origin or common education. Perhaps, at this point, it would be worth a possible correlation with the role of the metic in the political writings of Aristotle (we must

[45] Emmanuel Levinas, *Nine Talmudic Readings*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1994, p. 21.

[46] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*, p. 40.

[47] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*, pp. 73-74.

[48] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1994, p. 52.

[49] Anya Topolski, *Arendt, Levinas and a Politics of Relationality*, p. 169.

[50] Emmanuel Levinas, *Nine Talmudic Readings*, p. 50 & p. 77 respectively.

[51] Leo Strauss, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1983, p. 147.

[52] Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, Boston, London, 1988, pp. 37-45.

not forget that even the Greek philosopher himself was a metic: the ideal stranger at the threshold of the ancient city). The world is earthly only to the extent that it is a common world between absolutely strangers, hosted, temporarily and cyclically, on the fluid and dual nature threshold of the Earth[53].

This hospitable house that the world is rendered by the hospitality, Levinas points out, is the product of a nomadic civilization[54]. The world, which looks like given, at the moment when the stranger appears at its threshold as exteriority without any array of the I and the inside, ceases to be a world and transforms into this Platonic Khôra, this dark Levinasian *existence* (il y a), which again sinks the bond of hospitality in the night of absolute otherness[55]. ''The rustling of the *there is* …'', Levinas whispers, ''is horror''[56]: the moment when the amphoteric hospitality becomes as a miracle hostipitality. Consequently, strangeness as the term of the Levinasian *il y a* means that the bond of hospitality is a void space, empty of every being, of every identity, a negative promised land, a denial that always affects itself, a state of negative dialectics without any way out or a vain hope of totalization[57]. Hospitality in Levinas is not just something tangible and positive, nor something that emerges from the conventional house. It levitates in a secular threshold, which is constantly recycled and activated as an ambivalent war of love (hostipitality) between othernesses. Hospitality comes from the Other, but we can never be sure who the Other really is, since the field of this circular strangeness is dark and essentially depersonalized (il y a) in the sense that it exists as the field of an ambiguous Ego/otherness/exteriority, constantly sliding on the threshold of an anarchy of the impersonal[58].

This, therefore, radical Levinasian ethical and political heteronomy, as the rival awe of Cartesian and Kantian autonomy, or, otherwise, as a metaphysical inspiration of an ethical allegiance to the face of the Other man, which resists its thematization[59] and is ultimately embodied, as an easily comprehensive example, to the anarchical and impersonal bond of hospitality, essentially reveals the constant structural oscillation between the ethical and the political in the work and the thinking of Emmanuel Levinas. From this point of view, we have already pointed out above that the political Levinas cannot be exhausted one-dimensionally in the consideration of the Third. If we assume, then, that there is a Levinasian *state*[60], this will only exist as an anarchical state, that is a state, which will continually set the terms of its self-abolition with urgency, so that it tends every time, a version of the justice of the coming ideal state. For Levinas, the liberal state is not, of course, the same as the fascist state, but by definition this as well, even though it is a *rule of law*, it is not a just state[61]. The conclusion of his famous text on Hitlerism (1934) is indicative of Levinas's attitude towards the tergiversations of modernity: ''racism'', he writes, ''is not just opposed to such and such

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[53] Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, pp. 37-45.
[54] Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, pp. 37-45.
[55] Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, pp. 46-64.
[56] Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, pp. 46-64.
[57] Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, pp. 46-64.
[58] Emmanuel Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, pp. 85-96.
[59] Emmanuel Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, p. 35.
[60] William Paul Simmons, ''The Third. Levinas' theoretical move from an-archical ethics to the realm of justice and politics'', in: *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, No. 6, Vol. 25 (1999), pp. 83-104, p. 98.
[61] Levinas Emmanuel et al., ''The Paradox of Morality: an Interview with Emmanuel Levinas'', in: Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (eds), *The Provocation of Levinas. Rethinking the Other*, Routledge, London & New York, 1988, p. 172.

a particular point in Christian and liberal culture. It is not a particular dogma concerning democracy, parliamentary government, dictatorial regime, or religious politics that is in question. It is the very humanity of man''[62].

By the term humanity, the French Jewish philosopher does not mean a certain essential feature of human nature, nor some Kantian categorical imperative, but the strangeness of human, this element, which by definition, ensures hospitality at the earthly threshold. Levinas's reference to a dog named Bobby, which kept him company, as a human presence, during the years of his imprisonment at a Nazi concentration camp, is very characteristic. ''This dog'', he states, ''was the last Kantian in Nazi Germany''[63]. Here, from a phenomenological point of view, the meaning and value of Kantian mankind is first and foremost highlighted as the meeting with Other: as the look and the nod with the face of the Other, not with the power of a will that logically universalizes ethical imperatives, but with the power of *sensibility*. As Hannah Arendt showed in *Origins of Totalitarianism* and then in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, the world did not become inhospitable because of Nazi violence alone, but because early and systematically throughout the 19th century the West set up the planetary realm as an inhospitable system of imprisonment, control and ultimately fall of human otherness. The work of Enzo Traverso is an excellent kaleidoscope of this earthly desert in modernity[64].

CONCLUSION: HOSPITALITY AS POLITICAL THEOLOGY AT THE THRESHOLD OF ETHICS AND POLITICS

The relationship, the transition or the gap and the discontinuity between an ethics of hospitality (i.e. a 'face-to-face' ethics) and a politics of hospitality (something like the Kantian diplomatic hospitality under conditions (see especially the 'Third Definitive Article of Perpetual Peace')[65], all these versions or aspects of the complex issue of hospitality, set forth a series of relevant theoretical concerns and adjunctive interpretive readings about the very sophisticated and constitutionally eclecticist thinking of Emmanuel Levinas. The proposal for a transition from the ethics to politics or to a relation beyond the conventional contradictions of ethics/politics that the French Jewish philosopher himself has set up throughout his lifetime and throughout his work, which we can finally adopt here, to solve with a positive sign the riddle of a political Levinas, concentrates on what Miguel Abensour defines as an anarchical *disturbance of politics*[66] and which Simon Critchley further defines as *a post-political moment in politics*[67], in the sense of an ethics that is not exhausted in its metaphysics, but through proximity and *substitution*[68], it seriously distorts politics and, above all, the state or, in Levinasian terms, the totality, which by definition is tyrannical. I

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[62] Emmanuel Levinas, ''Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism'', in: *Critical Inquiry*, No. 1, Vol. 17 (1990), pp. 62-71, p. 71.
[63] Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom. Essays on Judaism*, p. 153.
[64] Enzo Traverso, *The End of Jewish Modernity*, Pluto Press, London, 2016.
[65] Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace. A Philosophical Essay*, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, 1917, p. 137.
[66] Miguel Abensour, ''An-archy between Metapolitics and Politics'', in: *Parallax*, No. 3, Vol. 8 (2002), pp. 5-18, p. 15.
[67] Simon Critchley, ''Five Problems in Levinas's View of Politics and the Sketch of a Solution to Them'', in: *Political Theory*, No. 2, Vol. 32 (2004), pp. 172-185, p. 182.
[68] Philip J. Maloney, ''Levinas, substitution, and transcendental subjectivity'', in: *Man and World*, 30 (1997), pp. 49-64.

get in the position of the Other, I become a hostage to the Other, I bear his suffering, and only in this way, I find my lost self, no longer with the illusion of autonomy and selfish freedom.

The ethics, consequently, of Levinas, can be perceived as a post-political disturbance of ethics towards the Hobbesian modern state (the Self-Leviathan) so as not to allow it, as happened in the 20th century with the hegemonic wars and the Shoah and continues to happen around us with the abysmal massive violence and sometimes the genocidal extermination of entire nations (as it is obviously the case of Syria), to degenerate completely into the extreme state of Totalitarianism[69]. In this way, disappear as well, the clouds of an approach to the Levinasian ethics of Other, which attributes to the France Jewish thinker a moralistic formalism, which collapses in the face of the cynical political realism of modern Zionism[70]. In other words, it offers to us the possibility of an alternative relation on the threshold of ethics and politics, beyond the two dominant stereotypes of a nationalistic Chauvinism and an abstract cosmopolitanism[71].

The traditional tension between ethics and politics, that the threshold of Levinasian hospitality may resolve, lies in the fact that the well-known political and largely state justice is nothing more than the metonymy of the primary violence itself, which is a direct violation of ethics. From this point of view, Levinasian ethics is not yet another ethical approach of the political, but the morality *per se.* In particular, Levinas's ethics is a straight resistance to the Heideggerian ontology of the Being, which, as a metaphysics of the presence (though it blames the ontological oblivion), places the infinity of the Other under the possession of violence of the Name. Therefore, the French Jewish thinker's response to the dilemma of ethics or politics is a metaphysical ethical politics, where Martin Heidegger's fundamental ontology is replaced by another fundamental event: the face of the Other. Ontology gives its place to religion, without a trace of mysticism and theology. That is, in an interpersonal relationship without a relation, in the sense of a relationship that has no subject and cognitive comprehension, that is, no authoritarian violence. In the place of ontological knowledge, the Other himself is placed as the authentic field of metaphysical sensibility. Thus, paraphrasing the famous saying of Edmund Husserl: ''back to the things themselves'', we would say that Emmanuel Levinas's threshold of ethical politics highlights the major phenomenological demand for a total return to the face as such. We should not forget, however, that the Levinasian face is not an aesthetic face, formed exclusively with the elements of vision (eyes, skin, etc.), but a strong sense, a meeting with the infinite, beyond the knowledge, a sensitive effect that deconstructs the power of possession and conquer and which as the *epiphany* of the face is finally found in the language and verbality of the Other man.

The face invites us, calls us and speaks to us, in its impersonal infinity, refusing to submit. The Levinasian im-personal face, by inhibiting every form of pre-understanding and power, is placed face-to-face on the threshold of ethics and power; on the world-threshold or on the threshold of the world, addressing the word of an infinite and unconditional heteronomy. The power of the house and the Name and the narcissistic freedom of the *Same* (la même) lose every basis of identity and are transformed into a field of ambivalent love, where the recovery of a certain freedom and an identity is a function of a difficult encounter

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[69] Enzo Traverso, *The Origins of Nazi Violence*, The New Press, New York and London, 2003, p. 63.
[70] Simon Critchley, ''Five Problems in Levinas's View of Politics and the Sketch of a Solution to Them'', in: *Political Theory*, No. 2, Vol. 32 (2004), pp. 172-185, p. 175.
[71] Cecil Eubanks & David Gauthier, ''The politics of the homeless spirit: Heidegger and Levinas on dwelling and hospitality'', in: *History of Political Thought*, 32(1) (2011), pp. 125-146.

and an absolute risk. The Hegelian dialectic of master and slave collapses. Emmanuel Levinas's new politics more closely resembles Michel Foucault's concept of microphysics of power[72], where *human condition* is reflected in the image of an action/reaction. Nothing is given and sure. Hospitality, as an asymmetry of responsibility, is a struggle for exposing the Other's call, whose face is im-personal and infinite. The host subjectivity and the visitor hosted, very quickly, within the threshold of hospitality, the threshold of ethics and politics, are transformed into a game of substitutions, where hostage and allegiance towards the life and death of the Other is the new fundamental treaty. The Levinasian altruism of hospitality shows both the constant passion of Christ and the endless exodus of Abraham[73]. The nomadic nature of hospitality cannot therefore be squeezed into the logic of the Third and a liberal rule of law. The encounter of ethics and politics or Jerusalem and Athens or Jews and Greeks in Emmanuel Levinas's thinking is an amphoteric meeting of absolutely and irreversibly strangers, discovering, through a Nietzschean eternal recurrence, the world constantly as a *refugium*[74].

This sui generis Levinasian ethical politics of hospitality is not a politics on the agenda. It is a predominantly *discursive politics* with no *agenda* where the communication with the Other is neither the Kantian universality nor the Habermasian deliberation[75], but an open meeting of absolute strangers; a questionable, difficult, asymmetric and precarious encounter at the verge of ethics and politics, in a topological space where the pluralism of infinite singularity redefines the world as a nomadic *ethos*[76]. Simon Critchley, with an à la Claude Lefort view of the anarchical singularity in Levinas, sets the nomadic people beyond the state; as an empty space; as a borderless demos; i.e. a synonym of a continuous disruption of modern power; in the final analysis, as an expression of an infinite *dissensus*[77]. This uncomfortable coexistence of singularity and multiplicity is the locus classicus of Levinasian ethical and political hospitality: a nomadic threshold that takes the hypostasis of democracy as an empty place[78]; or a topology of the Other; or an ambiguous civic love, which, as Jacques Derrida showed us by reading the etymologies of Émile Benveniste[79], stranger, strangeness, hospitality, hostility and ultimately intimacy are not more than superfluous meanings of the Latin term *host*: an ambiguous word; a word-threshold, whose connotations express clearly the situations of the amphoteric discursive hostageship in the Levinasian threshold of hospitality. Enrique Dussel, the Argentinean Mexican philosopher and formidable scholar of Levinas, seeks the osmosis of ethics and politics of hospitality in a radical critique of the state and of the totality (i.e. the earthly Caesar's state), whether this is a form of political order (totalitarian state: Rome, a Hegelian state, a Nazi state, etc.) or a

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[72] Stuart Elden, *Foucault: The Birth of Power*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2017, pp. 114-115.

[73] Emmanuel Levinas, ''The Trace of the Other'', in: Marc C. Taylor (ed.), *Deconstruction in Context. Literature and Philosophy*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1986, p. 348.

[74] Giorgio Agamben, *Means without End. Notes on Politics*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London, 2000, p. 24.

[75] Spiros Makris, ''European Demos, Citizenship and Migrants in a Globalized World. Some Critical Reflections from a Habermasian Perspective'', in: Marco Caselli and Guia Gilardoni (eds), *Globalization, Supranational Dynamics and Local Experiences*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2018, pp. 87-107.

[76] Feng-Wei Wu, Between Ethics and Politics - Reading Levinas Through Kant, available in the web page: *http://tpa.hss.nthu.edu.tw/committee/tpaseminar/2007/5D.pdf*, 2007, pp. 13-14.

[77] Simon Critchley, ''Five Problems in Levinas's View of Politics and the Sketch of a Solution to Them'', in: *Political Theory*, No. 2, Vol. 32 (2004), pp. 172-185, pp. 182-183.

[78] Claude Lefort, *Democracy and Political Theory*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1988, p. 17.

[79] Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality. Anne Dufourmantelle invites Derrida to respond*, p. 4.

form of spiritual power (Christianity, Christian state, Jewish state, etc.). From an Augustinian viewpoint, he puts at the other extreme the concept of the Levinasian exteriority (the heavenly City of God), whether has a political form (a secular messianism, the state of David or a new state of liberation) or a spiritual form (a prophetic messianism, Christianity as a religion or Hebraism as a religious community)[80].

The Levinasian hospitality as the prime location of exteriority or, otherwise, of this sui generis ethical politics is by definition the dimension of politics that in late Levinas acquires gradually the characteristics of a *prophetic politics*[81]. In fact, this critical political shift in the ethical thinking of the French Jewish philosopher has been gaining substance from his transitive work *Otherwise than Being*[82]. Prophetic politics is placed as a counterpart to the ontological politics, where politics is based primarily on a egocentric Self, attempting to incorporate the Other into the Same. This situation, whether occurring physically or spiritually, identifies politics with violence. Instead, Levinas attempts, through his prophetic politics, to delimit the frantic testimony of infinite otherness[83]. The return of the political, therefore, does not take place on an ontological basis, but through a political theology, which focuses on the concept of infinite responsibility for the infinity of the Other man, i.e. the falsification of singularity through the multiplicity. If we accept that the righteous state emerges in prophetic politics as an eclectic composition of Greek philosophical rationalism and of Jewish biblical sensibility, then the Levinasian new politics contains the elements of a pure political theology[84], where politics and religion constitute another version of *messianic eschatology*[85], which is the predominant cultural project of the European interwar period and of course the so-called Weimar (and indeed Jewish) renaissance[86].

However, Emmanuel Levinas's messianic and prophetic political theology is not exhausted in a formalistic ethical politics, which, as some have argued, is entrapped in a *fetishism of the other*[87]. On the contrary, the Levinasian speech about rights from the early 1980s to the end of his life (the late Levinas) develops as a discursive formation where the *Rights of Man* are replaced by the *Rights of the Other Man* and ultimately by the tangible and concrete right to life. Politics and the state are now called, through science and technology, to tackle global starvation. The resolution of economic inequalities on a global scale calls for the institutionalization of the right to life, that is, what Arendt delimited as *the*

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[80] Enrique Dussel, ''´Politics´ by Levinas: Towards a Critical Political Philosophy'', in: Asher Horowitz and Gad Horowitz (ed.), *Difficult Justice: Commentaries on Levinas and Politics*, p. 87.

[81] Philip J. Harold, *Prophetic Politics. Emmanuel Levinas and the Sanctification of Suffering*, Ohio University Press, Ohio, 2009.

[82] Arjuna Weerasooriya, ''Emmanuel Levinas (1906-95)'', in: Jon Simons (ed.), *Contemporary Critical Theorists. From Lacan to Said*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2004, p. 45.

[83] Arjuna Weerasooriya, ''Emmanuel Levinas (1906-95)'', in: Jon Simons (ed.), *Contemporary Critical Theorists. From Lacan to Said*, p. 46.

[84] Gavin Rae, *The Problem of Political Foundations in Carl Schmitt and Emmanuel Levinas*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2016, p. 139.

[85] Arjuna Weerasooriya, ''Emmanuel Levinas (1906-95)'', in: Jon Simons (ed.), *Contemporary Critical Theorists. From Lacan to Said*, p. 45.

[86] Graham Hammill & Gulia Reinhard Luplon (eds), *Political Theology & Early Modernity*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 2012; Leonard V. Kaplan & Rudy Koshar (eds), *The Weimar Moment. Liberalism, Political Theology, and Law*, Lanham, Boulder, Lexington Books, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, 2012; Victoria Kahn, *The Future of Illusion. Political Theology and Early Modern Texts*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 2014.

[87] Arjuna Weerasooriya, ''Emmanuel Levinas (1906-95)'', in: Jon Simons (ed.), *Contemporary Critical Theorists. From Lacan to Said*, pp. 47-48.

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right to have rights[88]. Human rights presuppose human life. Nowadays, the critical question could be raised as follows: can the modern state (i.e. a rule of law) be transformed into a just state? Can it renounce the element of violence, abuse and power perversion? Prophetic politics occurs just like a realistically messianic and eschatological sword of justice, in order to make the question of the rights of the Other man, as a vigilant conscience, a point of reference for the new Levinasian politics[89].

In the field of the rights of the Other man, the osmosis of ethics and politics takes place as the world-threshold of the Levinasian new politics or political theology. In one of the first texts that constitute the new discursive of the Rights of the Other Man, the ''The Prohibition against Representation and *The Rights of Man*'' (1981), Levinas points out the following: ''*The right of man, absolutely and originally*, takes on meaning only in the other; as the right of the other man. A right with respect to which I am never be released! Hence, infinite responsibility for the other: the radical impossibility of immanence! An affinity that ´´comes to mind´´ in the silent command of the face. The Word of God? In any case, the one that must *precede* Revelation in the positive religions if the men who listen to it want to know who is addressing them, and to recognize a voice that they have already heard''[90]. The Other ceases to represent a simple numerical data of a species, as this is usually described by a demographic and accounting politics of counting. The Other henceforth consists in a uniqueness, a radical otherness, in a right of the Other man, where the plasticity and the expression of the face cannot be deducted to the alienating state of a libidinal object, to the extent that the theophany of the face is not merely an expressive *epiphany*, but the very expression of the otherness, resisting every virtualization, understanding, and therefore thematization. The order of the face/God, Emmanuel Levinas points out, penetrates the Cartesian cogito ergo sum, which is awakened by the oblivion of the Being, but not as in Heidegger, in order to return to the status quo ante, in an authentic form of interiority, but in order to emerge from itself to the exteriority, beyond the immanence, in the world-threshold of the ambiguous, equivocal and amphoteric hospitality. The infinite responsibility, thus, is revealed as the metonymy of a love without *lust*[91].

In 1985, Levinas returns with a text under the title ''The Rights of Man and the Rights of the Other'', in which the prophecy becomes the conjunction of politics and ethics. In the conclusion of this great text, the French Jewish intellectual places the duty on the Other as the base of the difficult freedom. According to Levinas, through the right of the Other man, which ceases to be the natural right of an autistic subject, which is fooled to be free as *liberum arbitrium*, define myself as non-interchangeable: I get elected as unique and incomparable. My freedom and my rights, before appearing through my own question of the freedom and rights of the Other man [the Hobbesian 'state of nature'] will appear exactly as a responsibility within the human fraternity. Therefore, the Levinasian responsibility is no doubt inexhaustible because we could not have settled our obligations to the Other man[92]. The Levinasian discursive formation of rights will be summed up in 1989 with a minor yet important text with the related title ''The Rights of the Other Man''[93], in which the ethical

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[88] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 369.
[89] Arjuna Weerasooriya, ''Emmanuel Levinas (1906-95)'', in: Jon Simons (ed.), *Contemporary Critical Theorists. From Lacan to Said*, p. 47.
[90] Emmanuel Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, pp. 127-128.
[91] Emmanuel Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, pp. 128-129.
[92] Emmanuel Levinas, *Outside the Subject*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, California, 1993, pp. 116-125.
[93] Emmanuel Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, pp. 145-149.

and political coupling is now clearly defined as the right of a stranger or, more correctly, as this new meaning of strangeness as a hospitality in the modern semiology of presence and violence. Initially, Levinas presents the human rights as natural rights in the Hobbesian field of *bellum omnium contra omnes*. Historically, we all know that the solution between the rival free wills came through the imposition of the modern state, which was self-glorified in the 20th century in the Totalitarianism.

On the contrary, there is always the Kantian model of a self-regulated free will, which reasonably and rationally tries to limit the natural freedom through consensus. The Kantian good will, even as a practical reason, can, Levinas underlines, to control a cogito by definition free and autonomous? This is where the ontological conflict reoccurs in the heart of modernity that is within the very structure of human rights. The Levinasian hospitality, as an alternative model of human rights, as a new metaphysics, thus attempts sanctifying the human passion (political theology), to resignify the religious concepts of mercy, charity, and love as a child's eyes would see them within the perspective of sensibility. Many times, this technique of unconditional acceptance of the Other may hide surprises (see hostipitality), but always, according to Emmanuel Levinas, highlights the strangeness as the Freudian *unheimlich*[94], as something, in other words, that is this intimacy and the proximity of the Other face that we have deeply lost in our collective unconscious. In order to paraphrase a Jacques Derrida's saying, proximity means guarantee, and the moment when that proximity is accomplished at the threshold of hospitality, the transcendence of the foreign is conceived as the infinite distance of the Other. Contradiction? Obviously, not. This ambiguity is the very ambiguity of the language, which for Derrida is the essence of hospitality/hostipitility. It is this lasting and endless encounter of ethical/political or Greek philosophy and Jewish thought in the world-threshold[95], in a world that seems so earthy because it does not really belong to any of these creatures that, for thousands of years now, visit it as strangers, looking for hospitality or, rather, offering hospitality through the discursive call. As a concluding remark it could be argued that every refugee crisis, especially when it acquires the absolutely barbarous features of the humanitarian crisis, urges us to reflect on Emmanuel Levinas's magnificent thoughts, recognizing that his difficult ethics is the only, perhaps, road to a liberating act from everything that depresses us, whether it is deep in our soul or in the palimpsest body of the Hobbesian Leviathan.

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[9] Emmanuel Levinas, ''Being and the Other: On Paul Celan'', in: Chicago Review, No. 3, Vol. 29 (1978), pp. 16-22.

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TAKING RESPONSIBILITY AND THE MANIPULATION PROBLEM

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this paper is to raise an objection against the analysis of the notion of 'taking responsibility' offered by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza while developing their complex and attractive theory of moral responsibility. In this theory, there are two main requirements an agent must meet in order to be morally responsible for an action performed by her: first, the action must issue from a moderately reasons-responsive mechanism; second, the mechanism that leads to the action must be the agent's own. This second requirement is explicitly intended to address some problems for the attribution of responsibility that arise in the context of certain cases of manipulation—what I will refer to as 'the manipulation problem'. Fischer and Ravizza argue that this requirement (mechanism ownership) is satisfied when the agent has undergone the process of taking responsibility for that mechanism, and they spell out three conditions which, according to them, are jointly sufficient for taking responsibility. I will ultimately argue that this set of conditions fails to adequately address the manipulation problem because it either rules out certain cases of manipulation by mere stipulation or fiat (on one of two possible interpretations of these conditions), or is simply too weak to effectively rule out those same cases (on the alternative interpretation).

Keywords: Responsibility; Manipulation; Free Will; Ethics;

INTRODUCTION

My main objective in this paper is to raise an objection against the analysis of the notion of 'taking responsibility' offered by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza while developing their complex and attractive theory of moral responsibility (in Fischer and Ravizza 1998). A previous version of this article was presented at the Ethical Theory and Moral Practice 20th Anniversary Conference: Dimensions of Responsibility, at the University of Pavia, Italy, on June 9th 2017.

In Fischer and Ravizza's theory of moral responsibility, there are two main requirements an agent must meet in order to be morally responsible for an action performed by her: first, the action must issue from a moderately reasons-responsive mechanism; second, the mechanism that leads to the action must be the agent's own. This second requirement is explicitly intended to address some problems for the attribution of responsibility that arise in the context of certain cases of manipulation—what I will refer to as 'the manipulation problem'. Fischer and Ravizza argue that this requirement (mechanism ownership) is satisfied when the agent has undergone the process of taking responsibility for

that mechanism, and they spell out three conditions which, according to them, are jointly sufficient for taking responsibility. I will ultimately argue that this set of conditions fails to adequately address the manipulation problem because it either rules out certain cases of manipulation by mere stipulation or fiat (on one of two possible interpretations of these conditions), or is simply too weak to effectively rule out those same cases (on the alternative interpretation).

The outline of this paper is as follows: first, I will briefly explain the debate between two sorts of compatibilists (structuralists and historicists) and its relation to the topic of agent manipulation. I will then discuss an objection raised by incompatibilists such as Robert Kane to compatibilism in general having to do with cases of a specific kind of agent manipulation—what Robert Kane calls "covert nonconstraining control" (Kane 1996, p. 65). Next I will proceed to explain Fischer and Ravizza's attempted solution to the problem of manipulation through the notion of taking responsibility, and my objection to their analysis of this notion. Finally, I will discuss a possible reply they could make to this objection, and present an answer to that reply. Ultimately, I will argue that, as regards their theory, the manipulation problem remains unsolved.

1. STRUCTURALISM VS. HISTORICISM

Within the side of compatibilists there is an interesting ongoing dispute between structuralists and historicists. On the structuralist camp, philosophers such as Harry Frankfurt[1] and Gary Watson[2] argue that, for an agent to be morally responsible for an action it is sufficient that the agent possesses at the time of the action the right configuration of mental states such as desires, preferences, and values. These theories have been also labeled hierarchical, internalist, 'time slice', and 'mesh' theories. The main idea which unifies them as structuralist theories is that it is possible to determine, based on the features of the agent right at the time of action, whether the agent's action is free or not, or whether the agent is morally responsible for it. These features are sometimes called 'snapshot properties', since in principle one could observe them by only looking at the instant in which the agent acts, regardless of her past.

On the other hand, there are historical theories, according to which the features of the agent right at the moment of the action are not sufficient for determining whether the action is free or whether the agent is morally responsible for performing it, in virtue of the existence of certain elements about the agent's past which are essential to answer these questions. John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, in their influential book *Responsibility and Control*, attack structuralist theories about moral responsibility in general, and develop an account of moral responsibility which intends to be explicitly historical[3].

The main argument by Fischer and Ravizza against structuralist theories is that, regardless of the precise arrangement of mental states which is considered to be sufficient for moral responsibility, it is always conceivable that a manipulator could implant in an individual exactly that combination of mental states, and to do so in a way in which, even though the conditions for moral responsibility proposed by these structuralist theories are

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[1] Frankfurt, Harry: "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person", in his *The Importance of What We Care About*, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 65

[2] Watson, Gary: "Free Agency", *Journal of Philosophy* 72, 1975; pp. 205-220.

[3] Fischer, John Martin and Mark Ravizza: *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, , chapters 7 and 8.

met, it seems very plausible that the agent is in fact not responsible due to the manipulation exerted on her[4]. These considerations lead Fischer and Ravizza to affirm that the notion of moral responsibility is essentially historical; they say:

> "So, for instance, it is often thought that an individual's background can have a crucial impact on his subsequent moral responsibility. (…) And, of course, having the sort of history that arguably rules out moral responsibility is consistent with exhibiting the current time-slice features constitutive of responsibility (on the various nonhistorical models of moral responsibility). (…) We believe that there are clear cases in which the relevant snapshot features are 'put in place' in ways that rule out moral responsibility. For example, these features—the selected 'mesh' or configuration of mental states—can be induced by such processes as hypnosis, brainwashing, and even direct stimulation of the brain. When the snapshot features come from certain of these sorts of histories, it is plausible to think that the individual is *not* morally"[5]

Fischer and Ravizza criticize the use Frankfurt makes of the expression "taking responsibility" while he is discussing certain kinds of manipulation. In the relevant passage, Frankfurt says that an agent can be morally responsible in spite of having been a victim of a type of unconsented-to manipulation in which both the agent's first and second-order desires have been programmed by another person. Such an agent can still be responsible, in Frankfurt's opinion, if this person comes to identify himself with his implanted second-order order desires so that those desires become second-order volitions. Frankfurt declares:

> "In virtue of a person's identification of himself with one of his own second-order desires, that desire becomes a second-order volition. And the person thereby *takes* responsibility for the pertinent first and second-order desires and for the actions to which these desires lead him"[6].

Fischer and Ravizza present their objection to Frankfurt's theory (and, *mutatis mutandis*, to structuralist theories in general) as a dilemma: either the notion of "taking responsibility" in Frankfurt's theory is exactly the same as the identification of the agent with some of her desires, or it is involves a certain kind of process. If it is nothing more than the identification of the agent with her desires, then "*it is not clear how appeals to taking responsibility provide any defense against the manipulation examples*"[7] (Fischer and Ravizza 1998, p. 201). If it is a process, then the notion of taking responsibility introduces an historical element in the theory, i.e. it turns it into an historical theory[8]. Fischer and Ravizza thus offer a theory of moral responsibility which incorporates the notion of taking responsibility as a process which is a necessary condition for an agent to be considered morally responsible for his actions. Before turning to their analysis of this notion, it is important to clarify the kind of problem posed by certain kinds of manipulation for compatibilist theories in general.

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[4] Ibidem cap.7

[5] Ibidem, p. 187, emphasis in original.

[6] Frankfurt, Harry: "Three Concepts of Free Action: II", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, suppl. 49, 1975; pp. 119-120.

[7] Fischer, John Martin and Mark Ravizza: *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 201

[8] Ibidem

2. THE MANIPULATION PROBLEM

Fischer credits Robert Kane for having shown that certain cases of manipulation present a serious problem for compatibilist theories in general, both structuralist and historical. Fischer even refers to these manipulation cases as "*compatibilists' dirty little secret*"[9]. Kane distinguishes between two types of manipulation or "control". On one hand there is "constraining" manipulation or control, which thwarts preexisting desires, values, and objectives of the agent, as happens when we force someone to do something through coercion, threats, or physical constraint. On the other hand there is "nonconstraining" manipulation or control, in which the desires, values, and objectives relevant for the performing of the action that the manipulator expects from the person are induced in her, such as when "*we manipulate them into doing what we want while making them feel that they have made up their own minds and are acting 'of their own free wills'*"[10]. Kane says that the most interesting cases of manipulation are those in which the individual is not aware of being subjected to a manipulation of this kind, what he calls "covert nonconstraining control (CNC)"[11].

He offers as examples of CNC the cases of social engineering found in the utopian societies described in the novels *A Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley and *Walden Two* by B.F. Skinner. In these societies, people undergo since a very early age a thorough process of conditioning which leads them to have only the kind of desires, objectives, and values that are approved by the scientists in charge of the manipulation, in such a way that, during the whole of their lives, these individuals "can do whatever they choose", but only because "*they have been conditioned since childhood to want and choose only what they can have or do*"[12].

It is clear that this kind of manipulation can lead to situations in which the victims are completely satisfied with themselves and with their own motivational states, in a way that they can wholeheartedly identify with their first and second-order desires, as is required by Frankfurt's and other similar structuralist theories. However, Kane's point goes well beyond an attack to structuralist theories; according to him, "*CNC control poses problems for all compatibilist views of free agency, and not only for hierarchical views*"[13]. The general challenge compatibilism faces is "*to locate the relevant difference between the two that makes one of them (CNC control) objectionable and the other (mere determination) not.*"[14] According to Kane, it is "pretty obvious" what compatibilist must do in order to accomplish this:

> "They must emphasize the distinction between CNC control by other purposeful agents and mere determination by natural causes (without purposeful control by other agents); and they must argue that while CNC control takes away freedom in a significant sense, mere determination by natural causes does not do so"[15].

In other words, compatibilists must find a *principled distinction* between cases of causal determination which is due to certain kinds of manipulation and mere causal determinism.

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[9] Fischer, John Martin: "Responsibility, History, and Manipulation", *The Journal of Ethics*, vol. 4, no. 4, Free Will and Responsibility: Three Recent Views, 2000; p.390
[10] Kane, Robert: *The Significance of Free Will*, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 65
[11] Ibidem
[12] Ibidem p. 95
[13] Ibidem p. 68
[14] Ibidem p. 68
[15] Ibidem p. 68.

James Stacey Taylor, writing about the concept of autonomy, makes a similar point which in my opinion applies equally well to the topic of moral responsibility; he says:

> "An acceptable analysis of autonomy should not merely list the ways in which it is intuitively plausible that a person will suffer from a lack of autonomy with respect to her effective first-order desires, but must also provide an account of *why* a person's autonomy would be thus undermined, so that influences on a person's behavior that do not seem to undermine her autonomy (e.g. advice) can be differentiated from those that do (e.g. deception)"[16].

Some authors, like Alfred Mele and Gerald Dworkin, have realized the kind of problems posed by manipulation cases for freedom and responsibility theories but have refrained from attempting to solve it. In their work, they simply block this problem by stipulating, as a necessary condition for either freedom or responsibility, the absence of certain kinds of manipulation, without fully spelling out the details of what kinds of manipulation are excluded or of the reasons why these kinds of manipulation rule out freedom or responsibility. Thus Mele claims that "*an agent who performs an overt action A does not freely A if (...) he expresses unsheddable values in A-ing [and] those values were very recently produced in a way that bypassed his capacities for control over his mental life by value engineering to which he did not consent and are seriously at odds with autonomously acquired values of his that were erased in the process*"[17]. Dworkin, in turn, claims that a person is autonomous only if she possesses "*procedural independence with respect to her motivations*", which means that her desire to be moved to act by them has not been produced by "*manipulation, deception, the withholding of information, and so on*"[18]. Dworkin does not offer an analysis of "procedural independence", but realizes the difficulties such an analysis would imply:

> "Spelling out the conditions of procedural independence involves distinguishing those ways of influencing people's reflective and critical faculties which subvert them from those which promote and improve them. It involves distinguishing those influences such as hypnotic suggestion, manipulation, coercive persuasion, subliminal influence, and so forth, and doing so in a non *ad hoc* fashion"[19].

Fischer and Ravizza, as we will see, do attempt to solve the problem of manipulation while developing their theory of moral responsibility, and they do so by requiring that the 'mechanism' which leads the agent to act be the agent's own. A mechanism is an agent's own, according to them, only if the agent has undergone a process of 'taking responsibility' for it[20]. Let's now turn to their analysis of this notion.

3. TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

With the objections raised by Kane regarding the problem of manipulation in mind, Fischer and Ravizza offer a theory of moral responsibility that includes an element which they take to be essentially historical: the notion of "taking responsibility". According to the

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[16]Taylor, James Stacey: "Introduction", in James Stacey Taylor (ed.), *Personal Autonomy: New Essays on Personal Autonomy and Its Role in Contemporary Moral Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 2005. p. 7, emphasis in original

[17] Mele, Alfred: *Free Will and Luck*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 170

[18] Dworkin, Gerald: *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy*, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 16

[19] Ibidem, p.18

[20] Fischer, John Martin and Mark Ravizza: *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 2017

analysis of this notion presented in chapter 8 of *Responsibility and Control*, the process of taking responsibility for a certain mechanism that issues in action contains three elements:

1) The individual "must see himself as an agent"[21].

2) The individual "must accept that he is a fair target of the reactive attitudes as a result of how he exercises this agency in certain contexts."[22]

3) The individual's view of himself specified in the first two conditions must "be based, in an appropriate way, on the evidence."[23]

The idea of a mechanism that issues in action is left relatively unanalyzed, but is supposed to include both practical reason as well as 'nonreflective mechanisms of various kinds'[24], among which Fischer and Ravizza mention 'irresistible urges'[25],'direct manipulation of the brain by someone else'[26]and 'nonreflective habits'[27]. About this point, Bratman criticizes (rightly, in my opinion) the fact that there seems to be nothing in the three conditions that specifically refers to a particular mechanism, and so, he says, "*this account of taking responsibility seems at best to get at a general idea of seeing oneself as a responsible agent*"[28]. However, I believe the conditions presented by Fischer and Ravizza for taking responsibility are susceptible to significantly more important criticisms. The third condition requires that the agent's beliefs referred to in the first two conditions (that the agent views himself as an agent and considers himself as a fair target for reactive attitudes such as moral praise and blame) be based, in an appropriate way, on the evidence.

About this condition, Fischer and Ravizza say it is intended to imply that an individual who has been covertly manipulated into having the relevant beliefs about himself (and thus satisfy the first two conditions) "has *not* formed his view of himself in an appropriate way"[29]. They admit that they do not have an analysis about how the notion of a belief based on evidence in an appropriate way must be understood in this context, and that therefore their defense of compatibilism is not decisive[30], but they claim that at least they succeed in showing that it is plausible to think that taking responsibility is compatible with causal determinism[31].

In my opinion, it is hard to see how the notion of taking responsibility is able to do all the work Fischer and Ravizza assign to it in their account of moral responsibility, especially in view of the specific conditions they offer as sufficient for an agent to take responsibility. For example, I do not believe it is clear that these conditions guarantee that their theory is historical instead of structuralist.

Bratman detects this problem too; he writes: "*Fischer and Ravizza insist that taking responsibility is a genuinely historical notion. But this seems wrong. For all that has been said, it seems that I can newly come, at the time of the action, to take responsibility, in the*

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[21] Ibidem, p. 210
[22] Ibidem, p. 211
[23] Ibidem, p. 213
[24] Ibidem, p. 86
[25] Ibidem, p. 84
[26] Ibidem, p. 84
[27] Ibidem, p. 86
[28] Bratman, Michael: "Fischer and Ravizza on Moral Responsibility and History", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2000; p.454
[29] Fischer, John Martin and Mark Ravizza: *Responsibility and Control: A Theory of Moral Responsibility*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 236, emphasis in original
[30] Ibidem , p. 236
[31] Ibidem, p. 239

sense spelled by the three conditions"[32]. After all, it is at least conceivable that an agent may acquire the relevant beliefs instantaneously exactly at the time of action. However, I will focus here on an objection which I think goes to the center of Fischer and Ravizza's proposal. Imagine a case of unconsented-to covert manipulation in which the manipulator makes sure to completely erase any trace or evidence of the manipulation, in a way such that the person being manipulated has absolutely no way of knowing that her actions are the product of manipulation. Or suppose that the manipulator, much as Descartes' evil genius, has the capacity to make the person never even think about the possibility of being manipulated, so that the manipulation remains invincibly concealed from the victim. In any such cases, all the evidence available to the person would point to her not being manipulated. The person can then have the beliefs about herself specified by the first two conditions for taking responsibility; moreover, these beliefs would be based in all the evidence available to the agent. However, it seems highly unlikely that the agent is morally responsible for those actions. A reply that could be expected from Fischer and Ravizza to this kind of example is that the agent's relevant beliefs in the example are not *appropriately* based on the evidence. After all, as mentioned earlier, they explicitly intend this condition to rule out these cases. They could say, for example, that in order for a belief to be based on evidence in an appropriate way it is necessary that the evidentiary statements supporting that belief be always true.

Nevertheless, I think such an answer will not work. Solving the problem of manipulation requires, as mentioned before, that the compatibilist find a *principled* distinction between cases of manipulation and cases of mere causal determination. If the third condition for taking responsibility implies that the relevant beliefs of the person must be true, then Fischer and Ravizza are attempting to solve this problem by stipulation or fiat, since it seems very implausible that an individual could be an actual agent and an actual appropriate target of reactive attitudes if she is at the same time being subject to covert manipulation.

This objection can be posed in the form of a dilemma: either Fischer and Ravizza's notion of taking responsibility requires that it be false that the agent is being covertly manipulated or it does not. If it does, then their theory is susceptible to the accusation of trying to solve the problem of manipulation in an *ad hoc* fashion. If it does not, then their theory does not address the problem of manipulation at all, since it seems that one can easily imagine cases of manipulation in which the three proposed requirements for taking responsibility are met, but where the agent cannot be rightly considered morally responsible because of the manipulation.

Bratman characterizes Fischer and Ravizza's argument for supporting the conclusion that the concept of moral responsibility is 'globally historical'—meaning that the agent's past is important for moral responsibility not only because of the time required for deliberation previous to action, but also because the way in which the motivations of the agent came to exist are important—in the following way: "*the argument is that no matter how we characterize the agent's 'locally historical' properties at the time of action, this characterization ensures responsibility only if these locally historical features are free of the kind of pedigree illustrated by the manipulation cases*"[33].

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[32] Bratman, Michael: "Fischer and Ravizza on Moral Responsibility and History", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2000; p.454
[33] Ibidem 455.

If this description of their view is correct, then it seems that the kind of historical element that the Fischer-Ravizza account of moral responsibility truly needs, according to their own arguments, can only be provided by a *negative* condition: the agent's motivations must be free of a certain kind of manipulation in order for her to be morally responsible. But then they are right back at the starting point of the manipulation problem, for a principled distinction between manipulation and causal determinism has not been found.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have shown that solving the problem of manipulation requires that the compatibilist find a principled distinction between cases of manipulation and cases of mere causal determination. The set of necessary and sufficient conditions for the process of taking responsibility in the compatibilist theory of moral responsibility presented by Fischer and Ravizza fails to adequately address the manipulation problem because it either rules out certain cases of manipulation by mere stipulation or fiat, or is simply too weak to effectively rule out those same cases. This objection can be posed in the form of a dilemma: if Fischer and Ravizza's notion of taking responsibility requires that it be false that the agent is being covertly manipulated, then their theory is guilty of trying to solve the problem of manipulation in an *ad hoc* fashion. If it does not, then their theory does not address the problem of manipulation at all, since we can easily imagine cases of manipulation in which the three proposed requirements for taking responsibility are met, but where the agent cannot be rightly considered morally responsible because of the manipulation. Either way, the manipulation problem remains unsolved.

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[9] Kane, Robert: *The Significance of Free Will*, Oxford University Press, 1996.
[10] Mele, Alfred: *Free Will and Luck*, Oxford University Press, 2006.
[11] Taylor, James Stacey: "Introduction", in James Stacey Taylor (ed.), *Personal Autonomy: New Essays on Personal Autonomy and Its Role in Contemporary Moral Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 2005; pp. 1-29.
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BRUNO'S ORGANIC UNIVERSE AND THE NATURAL MAGIC

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ABSTRACT

Giordano Bruno (1548 – 1600) is regarded as the principal representative of the infinite and homogenous universe. Bruno has a modern rational mind by no means. However, his doctrine has so deeply influenced the reconstruction of a modern understanding of the material of universe and human body. His process of rebuilding the cosmology and humanity consists in learning the individual's psychical condition and the relations between society and man. The links between the components of the brunian organic universe can be generated spontaneously from "love-Eros" for the mundane life of its infinite expansion. And in his organic universe, Bruno considers and desires all beings to be alive, all to be animated. And from this doctrine, his predilection for the magic is derived, which is based precisely on the presupposition of a universal "panpsychism" aiming to take possession of the natural world with artifices.

Keywords: Organic universe; Natural magic; Infinity; Material; Link; Love-Eros

INTRODUCTION

> "As for Giordano Bruno, it is with a burning enthusiasm-that of a prisoner who sees the walls of his jail crumble-that he announces the bursting of the spheres that separated us from the wide-open spaces and inexhaustible treasures of the everchanging, eternal and infinite universe"[1]

With these words above, Alexandre Koyré includes Bruno among the protagonists of this:

> "scientific and philosophical revolution", who bring forth "the destruction of the Cosmos, that is, the disappearance, from philosophically and scientifically valid concepts […] of the world as a finite, closed, and hierarchically ordered whole" to a substitution of "an indefinite and even infinite universe which is bound together by the identify of its fundamental components and laws, and in which all these components are placed on the same level of being"[2].

It is Giordano Bruno who has to be regarded as the principal representative of the doctrine of the decentralized, infinite and infinitely populous universe. The essential infinitude of the space has never been ascertained in such an outright, definite and conscious manner before Bruno. Already in his Italian dialogues *La Cena de le Ceneri*（1584）, Bruno has acknowledged the drastic refutation of the classical Aristotelian and Ptolemaic doctrine which is against the idea of the motion of the earth. He proclaims that *"the world is*

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[1] Koyré, Alexandre, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1957, p. 43.
[2] Ibidem, p. 2.

infinite and that, therefore, there is no body in it to which it would pertain simpliciter to be in the centre, or on the center, or on the periphery, or between these two extremes"[3] of the world, but only to be among other bodies. As for the world which has its cause and its origin in an infinite cause and an infinite principle, it must be infinitely infinite according to its corporeal necessity and its way of being. Bruno asserts:*"It is certain that… it will never be possible to find an even half-probable reason, why there should be a limit to this corporeal universe, and, consequently, why the stars, which are contained in its space, should be finite in number"*.[4] At the same time, we notice that the new gospel of the cosmos is presented throughout the process of knowledge renewal that reformulated the Renaissance era. Across the two worlds - medieval theology and the great systems of the seventeenth century - Bruno, aiming to respond to the totality of man's experience, proposed a philosophy of nature. However, being different from Machiavelli's brute force with an infinite potential of "virtue", Bruno's potential is eradicated in the individual in the universe, and the legitimacy of power consists in consensus, rather than force. The driving mechanism is *"love-Eros"* among or between the intersubjective variations, namely, the reality of an organic universe. Therefore, the aim of politicians is to create, to identify and to guide the desires expelling from the nature of man - love. In addition to the reflection on ontology, this mechanism is endowed with a "praxis" dimension as well. In such an approach, the intrinsic mission/goal of a philosopher or a politician is to be an ancient magician. It is through this methodology that Bruno binds the approach of ancient magic together with the new organic cosmology.

1. REDEFINITION THE MATERIAL: MATERIAL IS UNIVERSE

It will be comprehensible if we start from the perspective of the defense for the infinite universe, where Bruno assigns the word a value that clearly goes beyond the cosmological sphere to assume a more complex and deep metaphysical meaning.

From the physical standpoint, *"immense and infinite universe"* indicates *"the compost"* of the *"innumerable stars, planets, globes, suns and earths"*[5] that move in it, and concludes itself in the identity. Ontologically treated as an organic being, the universe is the unique infinite substance, based on which the innumerable accidents can generate.

In the same way, in this profound renewal knowledge, Bruno strives to constitute a philosophy that responds to the totality of man's experience. In this sense, his organismic cosmology leads to a new metaphysical vision and a moral reform. Furthermore, it requires a rethinking of all the essential principles, from the concept of God, to that of material and man. During the sixteenth century, as for the theory of the infinite universe, man could not conceive of the cosmos without a systematic recourse to the experience. Consequently, this concept remains essentially speculative. While modifying its cosmological perspective, science must justify itself in front of the theological tradition. Bruno does not escape this paradigm: since God is the infinite creative power, hence even the universe is the infinite effect of that infinite cause. If God is the internal architect of the infinite realities that constitute the universe, naturally, He manifests also the universe itself as in its totality and infinite creativity. From the theological view, God is *"Mens super omnia"(mind is above of all)*, which out of the universe and the reach of man's rational capacities; instead, from the

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[3] Bruno, Giordano, *La Cena de le Ceneri,* in *Opere Italiane*, Laterza, Bari, 2006, p. 73.
[4] Ibidem.
[5] Bruno, Giordano/ Ciliberto, Michele (ed.), *De l'infinito universo e mondi*, Filoteo: dialogo III, in *Dialoghi filosofici italiani*, Mondadori, Milano, 2000, p. 377.

view of reason, by constituting itself as the privileged object of philosophical discourse, God is *"Mens insita omnibus"(mind is present in all things)*, the immanent principle of the universe, therefore, accessible to man's *ratio*(reason). If in the universe everything is life and death is only the apparent, hence everything changes and *"nothing is annihilated"*[6] and everything takes its part in the universal and organic life. Therefore, on one side, God is manifested as the universal form, an intellect or soul that fills enlightens and moves everything; on the other side, as the material, God is the unchanging substrate and always present in the things. In short, the material and the form are the identical reality.

The concept of material appears radically changed: endowed with an intrinsic active principle and movement, the infinite creativity is dispersed everywhere. It is moved and animated by the vital forces and likes an immense living organism. Moreover, the material is not something separated from the form, as soul and corporeal are two the aspects of a single universal and infinite being which is called Nature, corresponding to the One-all doctrine of the Eleatic School.

Firstly, in the most famous vulgar Italian dialogues *De la causa, principio et Uno*（1584）, absorbing and reworking on the ancient and medieval wisdoms, Bruno debates for his perspective of the organic universe, but represents it in the new significance.

The five dialogues of the work are specifically concerned of an ontological theme: the distinction between the concepts of cause and principle; that between form and material; the difference between corporal and incorporeal substance toward the motive of the One, in which Bruno integrated the elements of Heraclitus, Parmenides and Nicholas. It doesn't concern a question of the theological One, but rather of the One-universe when contrasted to the concrete beings, which represents the unity and multiplicity at the same time. The essential discovery of this operation depends on the new definition of material, which identifies itself with the infinite Life-material. Namely, it is absolutely the unique simplest and indifferent power, from which all things are derived and their conceptions will be developed and deepened.

Continuously, Bruno's original theory is improved in his Latin work *Lampas triginta statuarum*（1587）. In *Lampas,* the strategy of writing is full of the mythological metaphors when he is revealing the doctrines of material, the problem of unity, the notions of substance, virtue and power, the themes of concord and contrariness: the thirty fantastic statues described by Bruno have a dual propose and function. Firstly, they are intended to constitute a practical support for storing the knowledge's data; and then they will illustrate the intimate connection with the ontological structure of the reality. Chaos, Orcus and Night are the three ineffable principles, which designate the various degrees of the natural order. The three metaphors also prefigure material's rich and fecund nature, which is conceived as a prolific "womb" from which will germinate innumerable individuals and worlds.

The Chaos assumes the connotations of the vital material, which can become anything from time to time. It is the Chaos's emblem that vicissitudinally they possess a potential to become everything; they are the fecund infinity and the distinctive traits of the universal material. The Orcus, the second ineffable principle, presents its features as the condition of demand and privation in which the material principle is found. However, for Bruno it is no longer treated as a limitation or a deficiency, on the contrary, it becomes the conditions of vigor and fertility of universal material. In fact, the Orcus is the *"father of*

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[6] Bruno, Giordano/ Angrisani, Isa Guerrini (ed.), *Candelaio*, Rizzoli, Milano, 1976, p. 7.

every vicissitude"[7], because it makes everything, as it is eager to become everything, potentially be able to settle itself in everything.

The Night, the universal material reveals its own existence beyond the vicissitudinal motion of the entities, through which it expresses itself in infinite forms. Through the complex plurality of perspectives, it becomes possible for Bruno to speculatively visualize the universal life in which the material is the immutable principle of the realities.

In the light of his theory of the infinite and universal material, every being ontologically has the common substance and the same destiny. Bruno overturns the classical ladder of Nature, which describes an immobile and hierarchically structured universe. It is transformed to a tie of vicissitudinal cycle, in which the arrival point traces back to the starting one. This can be defined in relation to an idea of the primordial infinite material:

> "I let that the efficient of these things, called by you with a common occurring in the artificial things"[8].

During the medieval period, even though the theory of material or corporeal is almost ignored under the oppression of the rigid Christian theology, we can trace this indistinct but incessant clue among the most famous theologians, from which Bruno set off to chase his *nova philosophy.*

This doctrine elaborated by San Augustine in his commentary on Genesis (Gen. Litt., PL, 34)[9], is connected to the Stoic and Neoplatonic concept of *rationes seminales*, which detects a breeding ground that contains the germs of all forms in the primordial material. The acts that take place on the surface of material are in a potential condition and are perfected by expanding themselves in the successive degrees, but, only thanks to an exterior effort. Also San Thomas (Metaph., VII, 1.8)[10] has deducted on a similar horizon, which identified in the *inchoatio* of the form. It exists in the material which considered as the germ of the complete form, and can be actuated only by an efficient and natural effort. In particular, Albertus Magnus (De praed., V, 4)[11] underlines that the "desire" possesses an indistinct and primitive form that reflects itself in many specific forms. Precisely, desire is assumed as a particular form to witness the intimate perfection of the material. With different contexts, Bruno recuperates and develops these themes: first, in the mnemonics work *De umbris idearum*（1582）; and then in the magical treatise *Lampas*, where the doctrine of the *incohatio* is integrated to the Anaxagorean image of the *omnia in omnis*; finally, in *De vinculis in genere*（1591）, he returns to affirm the innate perfection of the material, which aspires to be transfigured into all the things.

Therefore, the infinite material can be *"perfecta imago et simulacrum"* [12]of the divinity. In fact, Bruno observes that this infinite effect is rightly called *"universum"*, because the images and simulacrums converge to compose an organic totality with it.

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[7] Bruno, Giordano/ Bassi, Simonetta, Scapparone, Elisabetta, and Tirinnanzi, Nicoletta (eds.), *Lampas triginta statuarum*, in *Opere Magiche*, Adelphi, Milano, 2000, p. 965.

[8] Bruno, Giordano, *De la causa principio et uno,* in *Dialoghi filosofici italiani,* p. 270.

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[11] Albertus Magnus, *Opera Omnia*, *De praedicamentis*; pp.194-236, Alberti Magni e-corpus online(http://albertusmagnus.uwaterloo.ca/).

[12] Bruno, Giordano, *De Immenso et innumerabilibus, seu De Universo et mundis*, cited from the italian translation by Giovanni Gentile in *Giordano Bruno e il pensiero del Rinascimento,* Vallecchi, Firenze, 1991.

Based on this unity which represents the immanent foundation of the natural life, we can comprehend *"all the being"* owing to that afterward all the determinations manifest themselves *"in these sensitive bodies explicitly"*[13].

2. MINIMUM COINCIDES MAXIMUM, INDEFINITUM IS INFINITUM

Bruno's cosmology and ontology are deeply influenced by the dialectics of Nicholas of Cusa. Nicholas describes the One infinite being as the two complementary aspects, which sustains and innervates each finite accident. In Bruno's Italian work *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante*（1584）, he established that *"the principle, the manners and the end; the birth, the increase and the perfection of what we see, is from contraries to contraries, is neither contraries, nor contraries"*[14], the "Cardinal of Cusa" is firstly considered as *"that philosopher who is known by the reason on 'coincidence of contraries'"*[15], and then explicitly mentioned:

> "that his divine principle of commensuration and coincidence of the maximal and minimal figure; namely, one who recalls the minimal number and another who recalls the maximal number of the angles"[16].

By referring to chapter fifteen of the first book of *De docta ignorantia*（1440）, Bruno, in a particular manner, lauds the *"contemplation of the equality that exists between the maximum and minimum, between the external et internal"*[17]. In the initial chapters of the work, Nicholas theorizes that the absolute maximum must be also in relation to the smallness as well as to the greatness; since as the truly maximum, it is necessary that God would be also *"of which there is nothing smaller. And since the maximum is revealed by the same way, it is clear that the minimum coincides with the maximum"*[18]: Nicholas continues *"the maximum quantity is maximally great, the minimum quantity is maximally small"*[19]. Excluding the big and the small, he disconnects the maximum and the minimum from the quantity with an effort of the mind: then you can clearly see that the maximum and the minimum coincide with each other. In fact, the maximum is superlative, so is the minimum. Therefore, the absolute quantity is neither the maximum nor the minimum, since in it the minimum and the maximum coincide with each other mutually. Extending the reasoning from the scope of quantity to any kind of determination, Nicholas concludes that:

> "the absolute maximum is absolutely above of any opposition. And since the absolute maximum can absolutely become all the things that can be and without any opposition. Therefore, the minimum coincides with the maximum, it is also above all affirmation and negation"[20].

The transform from the absolute maximum and contractive unity to the "one being", that is, the coincidence between the maximum and the minimum, conveys a new meaning to the motive of the contraries. The two extreme poles directly connect to the idea of the One-

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[13] Bruno, *De la causa,* in *Dialoghi filosofici italiani*, p. 284.
[14] Ibidem., *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante,* p. 482.
[15] Ibidem. p. 634.
[16] Ibidem. p. 616.
[17] Ibidem.
[18] Nicolas of Cusa/ Graziella Federici Vescovini(ed.), *La dotta ignoranza,* Città Nuova, Roma, 1991, p. 51.
[19] Ibidem.
[20] Ibidem. p. 59.

all, which represents the foundation and origin of natural life. Generally speaking, *"the contraries are turned into one and indifferent"*.

3. THE CONSERVATIVE ASPECT OF NICHOLAS: INDEFINITE DOES NOT EQUAL INFINITE

However, in fact, Nicholas observes that *"absolute maximum"* is *"the infinity in the negative sense, because it can only be realized in its full potential"*[21]; while the universe embracing *"all the things that are not God, cannot be infinite in a negative sense, even if it is without ends and is infinite in a privative sense"*[22].

Consequently, his infinite universe must be understood exclusively in senses of its temporal and spatial dimensions, unlike the brunian complete without setting the preconditions, namely, a perfect and absolute realization. Furthermore, the existence of the universe represents a "decline" when compared with the demand of an intervention from the third maximum, which is contracted and absolute simultaneously. Obviously the third maximum - Christ, introduced by Nicolas, can redeem the universe's dispersion and then bring it back to the extreme divine origin.

On one hand, Nicholas overcomes the vision of a limited universe, which is "very perfect in sense of the order of the nature" and "[precedes] all the things in order that anything can be in anything"; on the other hand, through the distinction between *infinitum* and *indefinitum*, he emphasizes the ontological subordination of the universe to the God. The nature of universe is weakened with respect to the third maximum which is identified as Christ, who perfectly realizes the nature of man as a "microcosm" and takes role of the intermediator between the "intellectual nature and the sensitive nature", in other words, the third maximum contains "all the universes" in himself.[23]

Therefore, between God and the universe, Nicolas introduced Christ and treats him as a perfect contract and absolute union which summarizes the true God and true man. Christ is endowed with the whole creation and related directly to the absoluteness of the Father.

Bruno criticizes this profound contradiction in Nicolas' doctrine mainly from two perspectives: firstly, Bruno insists a radical rejection of the mediation between creator and creature which is incarnated by Christ. Bruno uses the metaphor of the centaur *Chirone* to describe Christ: "man is inserted to beast", "beast is stuck to man", "in which a person consists of two natures and two substances concurrent in a hypostatic union"[24]; secondly, the necessity of identifying a mediation between God and the universe is disrupted. The transformation of such a role from the "*filium dei unigenitum*" （the only child of God） to a "*explicatio*" (explication, namely the reality of Universe), the relationship of generation and equality that Nicolas has established between God and Son is transposed. The universe does not indicate the dispersion or decline anymore, but rather a full and complete expression of the infinite divine power. As a result, the process of Salvation is no longer needed.

Bruno is convinced that attributing infinity to the universe is the nuclear of the new configuration of the relationship between God and the universe; in this perspective, the former ends up representing the inexhaustibly productive source of the latter. Escaping from the Creator's transcendence and alterity with respect to the creation, an infinite cause and its

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[21] Ibidem. p. 107.
[22] Ibidem.
[23] Ibidem. pp. 165-6.
[24] Bruno, *Spaccio,* in *Dialoghi filosofici italiani*, pp. 664-5.

corresponding effect characterize the internal excellence and deprive Nicolas' attempt of redemption. The nature of ultimate foundation is an essential unity, in which everything in the universe exists in the plurality. That is already included in its own perfect identity.

In this sense, Bruno's God is *"simple and indivisible"*, but in such a way, God can *"be for everything, be in everything"*[25]; moreover, it is precisely because *"simplicity"* is redefined by introducing the necessity to differ one its own from another, and according to the *"simple divinity"* which is *"found in all things"*, the *"the nature of fecundity, conservative mother of the universe is projected on different subjects and distributed in different names, individuals in the nature are able to interact with one another ."*[26]

In short, Bruno's conception of God and his simplicity reconfigures the relationship with a universe that is rooted in its own plenitude divine nature. As clarified in the *De gl'heroici furori*（1585）, the *"monad which is the divinity"* and *"this monad which is the nature, the universe, the world"*[27], which represents the *"geniture"*, are projected as two aspects of the same *"organism"*, *"and destined in the generated and being generated, or being produced and produced"*[28].

4. THE SOURCES OF MAGIC FROM FICINO AND AGRIPPA

Bruno, compared with Galilei Galileo, is not a very good scientist. As a matter of fact, Bruno's universe-view is vitalistic, magical. His planets in the universe are animated beings that move freely in the space of their own as assumed by magicians or of astrologers. In the field of Magic praxis, in order to study the artifices and consensus of *love-Eros*, Bruno firstly reads the Neoplatonism works of Marsilio Ficino with great attention, particularly the following two of his works: *Theologia Platonica*（1482）and *De vita coelitus comparanda*（1489）.

Commenting on Plato's *Convivium*, Ficino underlines the remarkable diffusive force of the *Eros daemon*, who is capable of tying the three levels of natural things, *"superior, inferior, equal"*[29]. With this modality, in order to realize the communication between man and God, Ficino eliminates the disproportion between finite and infinite. Superior and inferior realities are linked by a dependent relationship, as the former are "causes" of the latter, and the latter is "effect" of the former; the same things are joined together by sharing of the same nature. The action of *love-Eros* as a cosmic *"vinculum"* (link), which is emphasized ontologically in the cosmos by Ficino, is properly inserted into this network. That God reaches the corporeal characterizes the descending phase of the movement and the opposite direction are represented by the process that the corporeal traces back to the Creator. Simultaneously, involving the entities united by a similar level of beings, the love of the superior things towards the inferior one is realized by governing and controlling power of God to the angels, souls and bodies. The inferiors' love for the superiors consists in the desire which drives the souls: once being integrated into the corporeal nature, the necessity of the blessedness of the celestial realities is desired. In consequence, the celestial realities will venerate the divine majesty. *"The love on the intra-level coincides with the spontaneous*

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[25] Ibidem., *De la causa*, p. 80.
[26] Ibidem., *Spaccio,* p. 634.
[27] Ibidem., *De gl'heroici furori,* p. 921.
[28] Ibidem.
[29] Ficino, Marsilio/ Pierre Laurens (ed.), *Commentaire sur le Banquet de Platon, De l'amour,* Belles Lettres, Paris, 2002, p. 53.

tendency - the desire for a mutual unification among the same entities, just as the sensual desire among the same species".[30]

From such a perspective, the meeting point between those who wield power and those who yield it finds a place of compensation and equilibrium – the so-called consensus. From ficinian Neoplatonism magic, Bruno is conscious of that an organic universe or society does not root its decisions so much on force and violence.

Rather, the point is that man's desire is of a connective nature, it seeks union. Thus, the corporeal erotic is a primarily foundation being able to accept both instinctual elements and ethereal and mystical contemplations. In the context of magic, the ontological term material is transferred into corporeal intentionally by Bruno, namely the senses and bodies become the basic studies of the art of consensus. At this critical turning-point, Bruno assumes a separate theoretical direction different from Ficino. Bruno contrasts Ficino's position about the communication between man and God. In *Theologia Platonica*, where the soul, *"third essence or intermediate essence"*[31], is confirmed by Ficino as a *"vinculum of the whole nature"*. The third essence possesses the "*vires*" (capacities) of all the beings and therefore is "*vinculi fons*" (the source of the *vinculum)*, whose eternal, indivisible and indissoluble nature ensures the self-existence of the universe.

Although having some variations in *De magia naturali*（1590） and *De vinculis in genere*（1591）, Bruno also makes the reference to the same "ladder" metaphor of the being. However, instead of on the *Eros daemons*, or third invisible essence, Bruno pays his attention directly on man, as a subject privileged of the magic praxis: "the men" - as written at the beginning of *De vinculis in genere- "connect or subordinate to the vinculums or are themselves vinculums or conditions of the vinculums"*[32]

As a matter of fact, the classical ladder among the beings is not a connection, but separation. The loving connection identified by Bruno, on the basis of a unique principle, connects the homogeneous components. The world, then, is configured as One order, as a complex but well-organized structure. By this way, in *De magia naturali*, Bruno acquires a profound meaning and returns to the theme of the link of *love-Eros*, which then becomes the principal argument of *De vinculis in genere*. Both of the two magical works further highlight the two main elements which has been already presented in the mnemonic work *Sigillus sigillorum*（1583）: the *love-Eros*, by which we can reign the magic; the magic, which allows the complete and global vision of the natural world, and at the same time sheds light on the new discovery of the corporeal infinity.

Another author who is always present in Bruno's magical works is Cornelius Agrippa, who leaves a *summa* of the Renaissance magic - *De occulta philosophia*（1533） - which was widely diffused during the sixteenth century.

Though the chapters' structure of *De occulta philosophia* is constantly imitated by Bruno, this does not indicate that the doctrine is faithfully reproduced. By some significant modifications, Bruno detaches himself radically from Agrippa's original ideas: first of all, on the crucial theme of the life and the universal animation, Agrippa states that it would be absurd for the beings such as worms and flies to be alive and animated indifferently as like the noblest body in the universe. When following the pace of *De occulta philosophia*, Bruno raises a question of a different order: comparing to the single corpuscles, the universe

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[30] Ibidem.
[31] Ibidem. p. 13.
[32] Bruno, *Opere Magiche*, p. 47.

doesn't contain much superiority. Moreover, it is the individual components that determine the animation and vitality of the cosmos, the soil and the water, because this *womb* will *"generate, enliven and raise plants and animals"*[33]. Secondly, with regard to a training of the *solitude* as indispensable for obtaining intellectual purity, Bruno makes reference to the chapter fifty-three of the third book of *De occulta philosophia* in which it is shown how to prepare to receive an oracle; but this direction is not consistent with Agrippa's theoretical foundation in which the transcendental vaticination and the divine selection are integrated. As already asserted in the *Sigillus sigillorum*, for Bruno the *solitude* and interior recollection are constitutive; anyway, each form of magical operation does not derive from a possession of the agent from a superior being.

5. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATURAL MAGIC

Differently from the Renaissance pioneers of magicians, Bruno sets an explicit aim for the domain of application of his natural magic, namely, from the natural universe to the civil humanity.

We should remember that already in *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante*, by placing a eulogy of the Egyptian magic and the ancient magicians, Bruno has criticized this poison of Christian religion. Within this scenario, based on the operative element, the appeal for the magic offers Bruno an effective approach to the divine: *"[corpuscles] climb to the top of the divinity with the magical and divine rites for the same ladder of nature, therefore, the divinity descends to the minimal things for the communication with its own"*[34].

The emancipation of natural dimension is also based on the explosion of the *material,* always being the crucial foundation of the whole system of Bruno: through the metaphor of mirror, he explains how each fragment of natural reality represents the divinity, wherever it is located:

> "The spirit then [...] as to its particular and individual being, intend and intends that it produces again as the number of the forms and types - fragments of the mirror as many as the entire mirrors - result from a huge general mirror, which is a life, and represents an image and a form by division and multiplication of sub-level parts"[35].

As illustrated above, it is precisely in this step that the connection between the Latin works published by Bruno in 1582-83 and the Italian dialogues is separated from each other: that theory in *Sigillus sigillorum* is considered as a manifestation, and achievable measure then becomes the object of the research and reconstruction, that is, the unity of the life of all the things, one single light in all the things, one sole goodness, the unity of the sense; *love-Eros,* as a bridge*,* enables the textures of the infinite reality to be reorganized, but always in a non-definitive way, the infinite Life-material is in all, it is all, all can be done and the magician uses the arts to know and to operate the natural world, that is further understood as a great and powerful method of mediation.

Thus, abandoning the traditional treatment for divine being, Bruno concentrates on those *vinculums* that enable the natural magic to operate directly on civil creatures. This secular praxis is achieved by the influence and the guide to the individuals' interior activities. According to Bruno, the necessary components of each magical intervention

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[33] Ibidem., *De magia mathematica*, p. 23.
[34] Bruno, *Spaccio,* in *Dialoghi filosofici italiani*, p. 632.
[35] Firpo, Luigi/ Quaglioni, Diego (ed.), *Il Processo di Giordano Bruno*, Salerno Editrice S.r.l., Roma, 1993, p. 301.

consist in three crucial factors: *"active power in the agent; passive power or disposition in the basis in which the action occurs [...]; finally, appropriate application"*[36]. To effectively interact with these three components, we must operate at the level of the reality which is characterized by a constitutive way of its own movement and difference. Since the magician's praxis does not require a series of rigid precepts, rules or rites, once established, it could simply be put in effect; but the demands for a deeper knowledge of the Nature, in specific terms, according to the effective definition by the *De vinculis in genere*, that is, its rhythms and its principles, a *"universal theory of things"*, are still needed. Accompanied by an ultimate ability to distinguish and to evaluate the natural principles over and over again, the *praxis* has to include the most appropriate strategies for the establishment of the relationship between "agent" and "material". In the universe, single being does not carry *per se* an absolute and stable character; however, the magician, through acknowledging the always changing relation between "agent" and "material", is able to acquire a relative value of such relationship.

Therefore, the magic operator must be conscious of that *"neither anything is proper passive, nor active with respect to any other"*[37]. Trying to achieve a peculiar form of correspondence, according to the principle of Aristotelian inspiration – *"action of the actives on the well-disposed passive"*[38], finally the magical attempt can achieve a peculiar form of correspondence. As a result, a secular magician must acquire an adequate knowledge of Nature, and be enriched by the endowments of "far-sightedness" and "precocious reflection". Through establishing *"in advance the moment for conducting the link"* and seizing *"the favorable occasion with the maximum speed"*[39], the magician can control the appropriate links.

6. BRUNO'S POLITICAL PRAXIS: THE PATTERN OF A NEW SOCIETY

Bruno's magical praxis is far from the traditional physiognomy of the "ritual" and enchantment. Rather, it is based on the study of those psychical and passionate conditioning forms, which is capable of generating an integrated participation of the individual. It will be up to Sigmund Freud after several centuries in his famous work on mass psychology and analysis of the ego in 1921 in which he studied the same psychological phenomenon and the relation between the individual and the power seen from both of individuals and the masses.

Through an ontological scenario defined by the continuous metamorphosis of the material in his works on magics, Bruno pursues the man's potential interacted with the natural rhythms and he is completely immersed in the significant political implications via a magical art. Developing the connection between magical praxis and artifices of convincing the human minds, the magician who intends to become a cautious politician has transfigured into an *"animorum venator"* (mind's hunter) in *De vinculis in genere*. The role of a magician is described in the act of seducing the citizens through an instrument of persuasion, which leads the passions and inclinations in order to finally drive them towards the direction of One organic life.

Practically, the art of rhetoric maintains a privileged relationship not only with political praxis, but also with the magic one, alike Aristotle's partial opinion. Usually, orator and *vinciens*(connector) both share the consideration of what is proper to themselves and

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[36] Bruno, *De magia naturali* in *Opere Magiche*, pp. 251-3.
[37] Ibidem. p. 253.
[38] Ibidem.
[39] Ibidem., *De vinculis*, p. 447.

what *"be pleasant to those who must be enchanted and tied, evaluating their customs, their status, their characters (la sua complessione), their habits"*[40]. In the *"civil conversation"*, there is no effective link without affective involvement of both subjects in the relationship, that is, *"if (s)he who is linked is not in turn subjected to the tie, it is not possible to link with oneself"*; analogically (s)he has to talk about the orator that *"the passion cannot be aroused without passion."*[41].

Therefore, obviously the passion and desire for the Bruno's organic universe can be generated from *love-Eros* for the mundane life of its infinite expansion. And in his organic universe, Bruno considers and desires all beings to be alive, all to be animated. And from this doctrine, his predilection for the magic is derived, which is based precisely on the presupposition of a universal panpsychism aiming to take possession of the natural world with artifices, just like a lover casts a magic net with gestures, words, services and gifts around the object-subject of his love. Similarly, a "society's magician" casts the net of his fantastic vision over the world in order to capture his "prey" by means of his consent.

From this perspective, the art of politics acquires a profoundly new meaning. By entering directly into the interior dynamics, the politicians are able to influence the behaviors of the masses. Therefore, neither force nor destructive violence could drive man's passions. On the contrary, the relationships between men are organized by a new form of obligation which introduces force and power from the knowledge and application of the principles that are subjected to the continuous flow of the nature. A hierarchal division is transfigured into a consensual relationship among the components of the magical-political praxis.

The brunian citizen is a lover to be raped and tied. Bruno defines this chain of operations *"vincolare"* (to win). His *"condispositio"* and new *"ratio"* (reason) give the generic name to ties, that is *"vincula"*.[42]

CONCLUSION

I regret to claim, Bruno has a modern rational mind by no means. However, his conception of the organismal universe and society is so powerful and so prophetic, so reasonable and so poetic that we cannot but admire it and him. And his thoughts deeply influenced modern politics and philosophy. In fact, nowadays many historians and intellectuals consider that his works on magic are intelligent and offer political insights for understanding the behavior patterns in the contemporary social life. Thus, we must admit Bruno's importance in the history of the human mind.
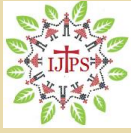
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[40] Ibidem., *De magia naturali*, p. 269.
[41] Ibidem., *De vinculis*, p. 487.
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GIORDANO BRUNO AND THE ISLAMIC TRADITION

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ABSTRACT

Giordano Bruno has been described as a philosopher, a mathematician, a poet and a mage: all of these terms depict a different aspect of the multi-faceted thinker he was. The development of his original and anti-dogmatic views is partly due to a constant confrontation with different philosophical, scientific and religious doctrines that Scholasticism did not share. Our aim in this article is to clarify the role of the Islamic tradition and its figures in relation to the thought of Giordano Bruno. There is no comprehensive study about this topic, though academics found a consistent connection between the philosophy of Bruno and Latin Averroism. Other topics concerning the Nolan philosopher and the Arabic sources deserve our attention: for example, aspects regarding the Western reception of Islamic science and pseudoscience (astronomy, astrology and alchemy in particular). Philological investigations establish that Bruno read Latin translations of Arabic works and found theories of medieval Muslim thinkers on secondary sources: in fact, he was familiar with authors like al-Ghazali, Avempace and Averroes, as he mentioned them in his works. In order to understand to what extent the Islamic tradition influenced Bruno, we analyzed and contextualized his references concerning the Arabs and the Persians. We concluded that he had an interest in the scientific and philosophical theories of the Muslims, but his overall view on Islam was vague and conditioned by the beliefs of his historical period. Moreover, we highlighted that Averroes was the only Islamic thinker who significantly influenced Bruno; though, the thought of the Nolan has more points in common with Averroism, rather than with the actual philosophy of Averroes.
Keywords: Islamic science in the West; Latin Averroism; Hermeticism; Alchemy; Astrology;

INTRODUCTION

As a European intellectual of the Renaissance, Giordano Bruno (1548 - 1600) lived in a Christian cultural context. The education he was given was also Christian, especially during his novitiate among the Dominicans at S. Domenico Maggiore in Naples[1]. After leaving the convent in 1576, the philosopher started a travelling life and had the chance to

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[1] Before the Neapolitan period, Giordano Bruno never studied in a religious institute. Gian Domanico Iannello, the first teacher of Bruno, was a priest, though. For more information on the life of the Nolan, cfr. Vincenzo Spampanato, *Vita di Giordano Bruno: con documenti editi e inediti*, v. 1-2, Principiato Editore, Messina, 1921; Michele Ciliberto, *Giordano Bruno*, Laterza, Rome-Bari, 2005; Bertrand Levergeois, *Giordano Bruno*, tr. Manuela Maddamma, Fazi Editore, Rome, 2013. Bruno became a Dominican and was formally Catholic until he turned thirty years old, then he moved to Geneva and converted to Calvinism; later, he adapted himself to Anglican and Lutheran contexts, as well. Surely, for him the concept of religion had the role of "social glue", as we are going to point out in the next pages about Bruno and Averroes.

meet thinkers from all over Europe. His interests in theology, philosophy and science (particularly the "new astronomy" of Nicolaus Copernicus) led him to extend his wisdom beyond the limits of his early education, regardless of the dogmas of Christianity. Apart from that, Bruno also came across themes of the other two major monotheisms.

During the Renaissance, the Latins knew many aspects of Judaism, also because of the presence of Jewish intellectuals at the courts, especially in Italy. Many Christian intellectuals even started to study Hebrew in order to understand religious texts. Indeed, there was a Christian kabbalistic tradition, which was represented by humanists like Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Francesco Zorzi. Unlike the previously mentioned figures, the Nolan never showed a deep interest in those topics, even though a certain influence is noticeable. In *The Cabala of Pegasus* he mentions the *sephiroth* and aspects of Jewish angelology, but we should keep in mind that in the same dialogue we also find some harsh criticism against the Jewish tradition[2]. On the other side, the Nolan held the Jewish thinker Avicebron in esteem, though he believed he was a Muslim[3]; in fact, in *De la causa, principio et uno*, he mentions "a certain Arab called Avicebron, who shows that in a book called *Fons vitae*"[4]. This misunderstanding of Bruno and the Latins derives from the fact that Avicebron was Andalusian: in the Middle Ages, Christians, Jews and Muslims lived together in Andalusia. In that cultural context, a mutual exchange between three different cultures was possible. This also led to the spread of works concerning theology, philosophy and science throughout Europe. Beside the Jewish tradition, the Islamic one had an important role for the Christian world, if we consider the importance that Arab scientists and philosophers had for the Latins[5].

The Nolan philosopher never visited the Islamic world. Nevertheless, he came across Islam-related themes and studied theories of Islamic intellectuals on primary and secondary sources. For instance, in his *De umbris idearum*, his first relevant philosophical work, he mentions the Muslim philosopher Averroes beside relevant Christian theologians such as Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, when he talks about the authors who played a role in his education[6]. As we are going to explain, the thought of Averroes and Averroism surely played a relevant part in the philosophy of the Nolan, but many other references about Islamic themes and figures can be found in his works. Our purpose is to analyze and

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[2] Cfr. Giordano Bruno, *Cabala del Cavallo Pegaseo*, edited by Nicola Badaloni, in Id., *Opere italiane*, v. 2, Utet, Turin, 2013, I, p. 438. Bruno defines the Jews as "vile, servile, mercenary people [which are] unable to communicate and be open for a dialogue with people of another lineage, which are bestially hated by them". Also see Id., *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante*, edited by Maria Pia Ellero, in Id., *Opere italiane*, v. 2, III-II, p. 362 (translation by the author): "It seems to me that that Jewish kabbalah is inspired by this [kind of magic], whose wisdom (whoever its discoverer is) is owned by the Egyptians, among which Moses studied". Jewish kabbalah is considered by Bruno as a deviant form of magic, therefore he negatively defines the Jews as "excrements of Egypt" (Ibid., III-II, p. 377), claiming that they simply borrowed a part of the ancient Egyptian wisdom for their purposes.

[3] Cfr. Felice Tocco, *Le fonti più recenti della filosofia del Bruno*, in *Rendiconti della R. Accad. dei Lincei. Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, v. 1, n. 7/8 (1892), pp. 529-531.

[4] Giordano Bruno, *De la causa, principio et uno*, edited by Giovanni Aquilecchia, in Id., *Opere italiane*, v. 1, III, p. 678 (translation by the author).

[5] For a comprehensive overview about this topic, see: Julio Samsó, "Al-Andalus, a Bridge between Arabic and European Science", in *Alhadra* 1 (2015), pp. 101-125.

[6] Cfr. Giordano Bruno, *De umbris idearum*, in Id., *Opera latine conscripta*, edited by Imbriani-Tallarigo, v. 2, p. 1, Domenico Morano, Naples, 1886, p. 14. In this passage, Bruno mentions "Alulidis" (genitive case), which is a Latinized form of "al-Walid", one of the Arabic names of Averroes.

contextualize them one by one in order to get an overview of Bruno's knowledge of the Islamic tradition.

1. ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

Before focusing on specific figures like the previously mentioned Averroes, we introduce some general concepts concerning Islam that we found in the works of Giordano Bruno. In order of importance, we start talking about the god of Islam. Bruno mentions Allah in *De Monade* beside gods of other religions*:*

> "IEOVAH and ADONAI among the Jews. THEUT among the Egyptians. ORSI among the Mages. SIRE among the Persians. THEOS among the Greeks. DEUS among the Latins. ALLA among the Arabs. GOTT among the Germanic peoples. DIEU among the Gauls. DIOS among the Hispanics. IDIO among the Italic peoples"[7]

It is worth noting that all the names included in this sequence consist in four letters. That might be related to meaningful concepts of esotericism and magic: in particular, the biblical *tetragrammaton* (a divine name consisting of four letters) and the Pythagorean *tetraktys* (a triangular figure consisting of ten points arranged in four rows), which were connected in the kabbalistic tradition. Bruno is not the first who made this connection[8]. What matters to us now is the fact that he believed all religious cults and spiritual traditions to be branches of a single true religion – that is Marsilio Ficino's concept of *prisca theologia*[9], which also present in the philosophy of Pico and Gemistus Pletho, among the intellectuals of the Renaissance. From that kind of view, different deities share the same role and common roots. Just like Ficino, Bruno inscribes different gods in the cult of Hermes Trimegistus, the ancient prophet who brought his secret wisdom to men in Egypt in an ancient past – at least according to a false myth that humanists made popular among themselves[10]. As we can see

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[7] Id., *De monade, numero et figura*, in Id., *Opera latine conscripta*, edited by Francesco Fiorentino, v. 1, Domenico Morano, Naples 1879, V, p. 387 (translation by the author). The names "Ieovah" and "Adonai" consist in four letters, if they are written using the Jewish alphabet. The same goes for "Theut" and "Theos", if we use the Greek letter theta.

[8] About the relationship between Jewish kabbalah and Pythagoreanism, see the following studies: Moshe Idel, "Johannes Reuchlin: Kabbalah, Pythagorean Philosophy and Modern Scholarship", in *Studia Judaica* 16 (2008), pp. 30-55; Frances Amelia Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1964, p. 146 ff. In his *De arte cabalistica*, German kabbalist Johannes Reuchlin (1455 - 1522) explicitly connected the tetragrammaton with the tetraktys. Bruno never mentions Reuchlin explicitly, though philologist Felice Tocco claims that the philosopher knew the works of this kabbalist. Cfr. Felice Tocco, *Le fonti*, p. 534.

[9] Cfr. Marsilio Ficino, *The Philebus Commentary*, tr. M. J. B. Allen, University of California Press, Berkeley 1975, pp. 142-144: "Why everybody call God by four letters? The Hebrews by the four vowels "he ho ha hi"; the Egyptians by *"Theuth"; the Persians by "Syre"; the Magi by "Orsi" whence "Oromasis"; the Greeks by "Theos"; ourselves by "Deus"; the Arabs by "Alla"; Mahomed by "Abgdi". Again we accepted "Jesu" from Gabriel [...] Surely such diverse races would not otherwise have agreed on the one name of the unknown God, unless they were divinely inspired? And if they received it from Adam, it was by divine inspiration they received that name rather than others.*" We find it natural to make a comparison with the previously quoted passage of *De Monade*. In the writings of Bruno, the implicit references to *De vita coelitus comparanda* and other works by the Tuscan neoplatonist are many. The Nolan was even accused of plagiarism in 1583 at Oxford: George Abbot claimed that his lectures on the immortality of the soul and on the quintuple sphere were based *verbatim* on Ficino's writings.

[10] Cfr. Frances Amelia Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, ch. XXI (*After Hermes Trismegistus was dated*). In 1614, philologist Isaac Casaubon dated the *Corpus Hermeticum* and proved that hermetic texts were written in post-Christian times. This discovery undermined the myths about Egypt and Hermes Trismegistus; it did not take effect immediately, because some intellectuals ignored or refused it. We

by the previous quote, Allah is included in this syncretic view, as well: seemingly, Bruno does not distinguish the god of the Arabs from the others; in his perspective, they represent the same god – the god who revealed the truth to men in different cultures. This also explains why the Nolan counted Muhammad among figures prophets and notable men who have nothing to do with Islam, though they all represent people to whom the divine revealed himself[11]. In the works of Bruno, we can also find references to the Arab phoenix. In the Arabic and Persian medieval world, the phoenix was a symbol for the divine essence or the search for the divine, though the origin of this figure is pre-islamic. The phoenix became a popular symbol in the Western world, as well. As other authors did in the Renaissance, Bruno used it as a literary figure and even wrote a poem on the Arabic mythological beast. It would be exaggeration to relate the presence of the phoenix in the writings of Bruno to the knowledge of Arab sources, though[12].

A further relevant aspect concerning Islam in the works of Bruno is the awareness of the distinction between Sunni and Shia Muslims, the two main religious branches of Islam. In the *Ash Wednesday Supper* we can find a reference about this topic in a praise to Elisabeth I, queen of England:

> ""[Elisabeth and other English politicians] can extinguish and banish darkness with the light of their great culture and, with the warmth of the loving courtesy, they can civilize and purify every rudeness and rusticity that can be found not only among Britons, but also among Shias, Arabs, Tartars, cannibals and antropophagists."[13]

Firstly, we point out that the "Shias" are distinguished by the "Arabs": by this last broad term, Bruno is probably referring to Sunnis, as they represent the majority of Muslims and the main pole of Islam. The opinion of the Nolan about Muslims in this passage seems to be negative, as he mentions them beside "barbarian" peoples. This is apparently confirmed in the so-called "hermetic lament" in *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*:

> "Egypt, of your religions only fables will remain, and they'll also be discredited by the future generations: the only thing that will tell them about your pious actions will be the letters which are carved in stones, which won't tell anything about gods and men [...], but about Shias and Indians, or other similar savages"[14]

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point out that the echo of the hermetic texts in the Reinassaince was not so strong as Frances Yates claims in his study.

[11] Cfr. Giordano Bruno, *De lampade combinatoria lulliana*, in Id., *Opera latine conscripta*, edited by Tocco-Vitelli, v. 2, p. 2, Le Monnier, Florence 1890, p. 240. Beside Muhammad, Bruno mentions prophetic figures like Hermes Trimegistus, Moses and Zoroaster, but also historical figures like Plato and Romulus.

[12] Bruno mentions the phoenix in the *Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast* (I, III) and in the *Heroic Frenzies* (I, V). Cfr. Id., *Gli eroici furori*, edited by Nicoletta Tirinnanzi, BUR, Milan, 2015, I-V, p. 202:

"Unico augel del sol, vaga Fenice,/Ch'appareggi col mondo gli anni tui,/ Quai colmi ne l'Arabia felice,/ Tu sei chi fuste, io son quel che non fui./ Io per caldo d'amor muoio infelice;/ Ma te ravviv'il sol co' raggi sui./ Tu bruggi 'n un, ed io in ogni loco;/ Io da Cupido, hai tu da Febo il foco./ Hai termini prefissi/ Di lunga vita, e io ho breve fine,/ Che pronto s'offre per mille ruine;/ Né so quel che vivrò, né quel che vissi:/ Me cieco fato adduce,/ Tu certo torni a riveder tua luce."

In the Renaissance, the phoenix was a symbol in alchemy and in literature – we can find it in the writings of notable Italian authors such as Ludovico Ariosto, Torquato Tasso and Francesco Petrarca. Furthermore, printers like Aldo Manuzio used to represent the phoenix in frontispieces. Cfr. Francesco Zambon & Alessandro Grossato, *Il mito della fenice in Oriente e in Occidente*, Marsilio, Venice, 2004.

[13] Giordano Bruno, *La cena de le ceneri*, edited by Augusto Guzzo, Mondadori, Milan, 2012, II, p. 55 (translation by the author). By mentioning "Britons", Bruno is probably referring also to the conflict between Puritans and Anglicans; the philosopher held the queen in esteem, and then he was pro-Anglicanism.

[14] Id., *Spaccio*, III-II, p. 364 (translation by the author).

One of the most important implications of Bruno's thought is the rejection of any "scale of nature" on the basis of which a certain being is somehow inferior to another. In fact, if God's creation is infinite, as the philosopher claims, then it is impossible to establish a hierarchy of being[15]: then, man does not have a central position in the cosmos. A further consequence of this perspective is that an ethnic group cannot be inferior, neither superior to another. When the Nolan calls the Arabs and the Shias "savages", he does not mean that they are subhumans or something like that; in our opinion, he rather wanted to highlight their *diversity* compared to the Europeans, from an anthropological point of view[16].

Apart from the differencies between the East and the West and their respective peoples, we already claimed that the cultural environments of these two worlds were both influenced by the works of intellectuals belonging to the tradition of the Arabs – some living in the medieval al-Andalus, some others not. We introduce them in the next paragraphs.

2. ASTROLOGY

Firstly, it is worth to mention the influence of the Islamic astrological tradition on the West. Islamic astrology was known in Europe especially from the 12th century onwards, after the spread of the work *De magnis coniunctionibus* by Albumasar (787 - 886), a Persian author whose real name was in fact Abu Maʿshar. We shall remember that originally astronomy and astrology were indistinguishable: hence, in the theories of Albumasar we find the scientific concepts of determinism and naturalism. Beside of that, in his thought we can find superstitious beliefs, as well: Albumasar believed in the connection between the celestial phenomena of nature and the wordly affairs of men. His view has been summarized quite well by Ibn Khaldun, one of the most important Arab historiographers of the Middle Ages. Here below we give his significant account on astrology:

> "Astrologers, in making forecasts concerning dynasties, base themselves upon astrological judgments. For matters of general importance such as royal authority and dynasties, they use

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[15] In the philosophy of Bruno, creation is necessarily infinite. Claiming that God created a finite number of beings would mean that the divine power is also finite – which is unacceptable for the Nolan, for he considered God to be perfect and almighty. Cfr. Miguel Angel Granada, "Il rifiuto della distinzione fra *potentia absoluta* e *potentia ordinata* di Dio e l'affermazione dell'universo infinito in Giordano Bruno", in *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 49-3 (1994), pp. 495-532.

[16] An example of the anthropological perspective of Bruno and the concept of diversity is present in the following minor work: Giordano Bruno, *De principiis rerum, elementis et causis*, in Id., *Opera latine conscripta, edited by Tocco-Vitelli, v. 3*, Le Monnier, Florence, 1891, p. 555: "*Sic etiam complexiones hominum in diversis locis diversae. Germani habent corpora generaliter proceriora, fortiora, bene colorata, sed tarda et gravia; Hispani generaliter breviora, sicciora, decolora, sed agilia. Ingenium quoque diversum est, quod hanc corporis diversitatem consequitur. Similes Hispanis hi qui habitant regiones magis australes, ut Mauri, Arabes [...]*". The term "complexio" (which means more or less "physical structure") is present also in the *Cabala of Pegasus*, in which Bruno writes that the main difference between humans and animals is due to their respective atom-structure; there is no inferior or superior being, though. The same perspective can be applied to the debate on the native Americans. Cfr. Massimiliano Traversino, *Sovranità in controluce. Bruno, Gentili e il dibattito cinquecentesco sulla condizione dei nativi americani*, in Id. (eds.), *Verità e dissimulazione. L'infinito di Giordano Bruno tra caccia filosofica e riforma religiosa*, Editrice Domenicana Italiana, Naples, 2015, pp. 472-473: "*In a debate like the one which has arisen after the meeting of Europeans and native Americans, there were two main possible tendencies: on one side, the claim of animality and bestiality could be adopted to neglect them a full human nature and consider them as "natural slaves" [...] it was possible to claim, in contrast, that all peoples from all over the world share a "common bloodline". Ultimately, Bruno did not agree on either of those positions. If, of the first one, he did not share at all the idea of inferiority of the natives, he actually did not accept neither the second one. He rather believed in the diversity of those people, in contrast with the concept of inferiority.*"

the conjunctions, especially those of the two superior planets. […] The conjunctions of the two superior planets are divided into great, small, and medium. The great conjunction is the meeting of the two superior planets in the same degree of the firmament, which reoccurs after 960 years. […] The great conjunction indicates great events, such as a change in royal authority or dynasties, or a transfer of royal authority from one people to another. The medium conjunction [indicates] the appearance of persons in search of superiority and royal authority. The small conjunction [indicates] the appearance of rebels or propagandists, and the ruin of towns or of their civilization"[17].

As Ibn Khaldun claims, the political implications of astrological theories led humanists to incorporate eschatological and fatalist beliefs into their concept of history. This does not apply only for the medieval Islamic world, but also for the West during the Renaissance. In the specific case of Bruno, a connection between astrology and Hermeticism is quite evident in a passage of *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast* that we already quoted before:

""[Hermes Trismegistus is speaking to his disciple through Sofia.] Asclepius, do you see these animated statues, full of meaning and spirit, which make those actions and many worthy [other actions]? I mean these statues, which can foretell future events, cause disease, cure, joy and sadness to moods and human bodies in accordance with what they deserve? Oh Asclepius, don't you know that Egypt is the reflection of the sky and, to be exact, the colony of all the things, which are ruled and applied in the sky? To tell the truth, our land [Egypt] is the world's temple. But alas, there will come a time when Egypt will seem to have been in vain lover of the deity: because the deity will move back to the sky through trasmigration and leave Egypt desert and this divine throne will be widow of every religion, for it has been abandoned by the presence of the gods, for there stranger and barbaric peoples without religion, mercy, law or any cult will dominate. Oh Egypt! Egypt, of your religions only fables will remain, and they'll also be discredited by the future generations: the only thing that will tell them about your pious actions will be the letters carved in stones, which won't tell anything about gods and men anymore but Shias and Indians, or other similar savages (because they will be dead and the deity will be transmigrated to the sky)"[18]

In the hermetic lament, wars and changes in dynasties are not the only events determined by astral influences: the rise and the fall of religions is involved, as well. Here we have a description of Hermes Trismegistus' death and its consequences for humanity, which are both spiritual (the loss of wisdom) and political (the rise of barbarians). For our part, we consider these "fatalistic" descriptions as a part of the imaginary of the Renaissance. Bruno was not an astrologer, but he was fascinated by the astrology-related topics of Hermeticism, probably because they depicted a history of human culture. As he read the works of Marsilio Ficino and Cornelius Agrippa, Bruno probably knew also the *Picatrix* (*Kitab ghayat al-hakim*), a book of magic and astrology.

In the thought of the Nolan, the kind of "apocalypticism" we talked about is not the only topic in relation with astrology, as we are going to point out. The main concept behind *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast* may be connected to astrological beliefs. In the plot of the dialogue, the "triumphant beast" possibly symbolizes a constellation. The *dramatis personae* talk about vices placed in the sky; those vices shall be replaced by virtues in order

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[17] Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, tr. Franz Rosenthal, v. 2, Routledge & Paul, London, 1958, pp. 212-213. Actually, Ibn Khaldun summarized Albumasar's *Book of conjunctions* in order to criticize him (and astrologers in general).
[18] Giordano Bruno, *Spaccio*, III, pp. 363-364 (translation and italics by the author).

to promote a moral revolution: again, we find the idea of heavenly bodies influencing the life of men on earth, though this is expressed only implicitly[19].

A further example of the influence of astrology in Nolan philosophy are so-called wheels of memory, which can be found in *De umbris idearum*[20] and other works on mnemotechnics: they show figures of astrological decans. Though, the weels of Bruno are different than the decans, as their main function is to make complex associations: they loose the symbolic meaning of the decans to get a more practical and rational use in relation with memory and language, which is almost in line with the exclusively mathematical approach of Copernican astronomy for some aspects (though, the Nolan criticized the theoretical approach of mathematics at least in *Mordentius*, *De Mordentii circino*, *The Ash Wednesday Supper* and *Articuli contra mathematicos*).

3. ASTRONOMY

While astrology influenced Bruno's ethics, mnemotechnics and concept of history, astronomy played a role in the development of his physical and cosmological doctrines. Regarding these topics, Bruno referred again to the theories of Albumasar, who was also an astronomer[21]. In *De immenso*, his final work on the infinity of the universe, he wrote:

> "Before these Italian astronomers, also Albumasar, among the Arabic peripatetics, believed that comets move above Venus. […] Other people believe that there was a new star above Saturn which showed itself in the months of October and November; I've read their observation just as it has been made by the astronomers of Uraniborg."[22]

This is a clear example of Bruno's criticsm against Aristotelianism. The Stagirite denied the possibility of the presence of comets beyond the sublunary sphere: from his perspective, a comet cannot move within the celestial spheres, for linear motion and corruption are sings of imperfection characterizing the sublunary spheres. Bruno believes that Albumasar was a peripatetic, but he was not. The Persian astronomer borrowed Aristotelian theories concerning physics and cosmology, but his opinion on comets was not "peripatetic" at all. It was in line with the discoveries of Tycho Brahe, the Danish astronomer who observed the transit of comets in 1577 and 1585 in the observatory of Uraniborg; at the time, Tycho Brahe was the first to deny the existence of celestial spheres. To Bruno, those observations were the final empirical confirmation to his doubts about Aristotelian cosmology. Other Muslim astronomers quoted by Bruno are the Arab al-Battani (c. 858 - 929) and the Persian Jabir ibn Hayyan (c. 721 - c. 815), also known as Geber in the Western

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[19] Cfr. Eugenio Garin, *Lo zodiaco della vita. La polemica sull'astrologia dal Trecento al Cinquecento*, Laterza, Rome-Bari, 2007, pp. 122-126. Eugenio Garin suggests that astrology influenced Bruno's thought (particularly referring to mnemotecnics). Our considerations are a development of this line of thinking.

[20] The third part of *Ars memoriae* contains various descriptions of astrological figures with references to heavenly bodies. Bruno does not mention Albumasar, neither the *Book of conjunctions*, though.

[21] Astronomy and astrology were closely linked in the Middle Ages and even more particularly in the Renaissance, as Garin points out. Cfr. Eugenio Garin, *Lo zodiaco della vita* (translation by the author): "[…] in the age of the Renaissance, within astrology there was a clear distinction between two aspects […] which were often overlapped by the only term *astrologia*: the first aspect concerns religion and supestition, the second one is critical-scientific. In that way, predictive astrology […] was finally isolated and defeated once and for all by mathematic astrology, i.e. the actual astronomy […]"

[22] Giordano Bruno, *De innumerabilibus, immenso et infigurabili*, in Id., *Opera latine conscripta,* edited by Fiorentino, v. 1, p. 1, Domenico Morano, Naples 1879, pp. 52-53 (translation by the author).

world[23]; though, their astronomical theories played a minor role in the thought of the Nolan, if compared to those of Copernicus and Tycho Brahe.

4. ALCHEMY

Nevertheless, Geber was still an authority in alchemy and Bruno considered him the founder of this discipline, beside Hermes Trismegistus:

> "So this work must be led in accordance with the doctrine of Hermes and Geber. The matter of all metals is Mercury: lead belongs to Saturn, tin to Jupiter, iron to Mars, gold to the Sun, Bronze to Venus, silver to the Moon."[24]

In this and other passages of the *Candelaio* we find references to the alchemical belief that celestial bodies exercise a dominion on the metals of Earth without any physical contact – not a kind gravitational theory, but still a modern approach to physics. Alchemists applied this principle also to medicine and it is no coincidence that, further on the same quote, Bruno mentions the Persian polymath Ibn Sina (980 - 1037), also known as Avicenna. His *Canon of medicine* and his commentaries on Aristotelian works were extremely important for the scholastics. Though, it seems that Bruno was not influenced by the philosophy of Avicenna, as he never talked extensively about his thought[25].

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[23] There was a Latin "Geber" and a "Geber" whose real name was Jabir ibn Aflah al-Ishbili, an Andalusian astronomer. We believe that Bruno is referring to the "Geber" corresponding to Jabir ibn Hayyan. His source is Pico, who criticized both Geber and al-Battani in a text against astrology. Cfr. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, edited by Eugenio Garin, Vallecchi, Florence, 1942, II, p. 324. Regarding al-Battani, he was also known by Nicolaus Copernicus, who quoted him twentythree times in his *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*. Cfr. Nidhal Guessoum, "Copernicus and Ibn al-Shatir: Does the Copernican Revolution have Islamic Roots?", in *The Observatory* 128 (2008), pp. 231-239. Bruno mentions al-Battani in the *Ash Wednesday Supper* under the name of "Machometto Aracense" with reference to the problem of the variation of equinoxes. We identify him with al-Battani, for "Machometto" derives from Muhammad (one of his prenames) and he lived in al-Raqqah, whence derives "Aracense"; cfr. Giordano Bruno, *Cena*, I, p. 32. In *De immenso*, Bruno writes that the estimations of the diameters of the sun and the moon given by al-Battani, Ptolemy and Geber are wrong. Cfr. Id., *De Immenso*, III-V, p. 167: "Audio Bathen Machilinensem inter praecipuos mathematicos referre ad instrumentorum super ea re suspicionem quod Ptolemaeus, Geber et Albategni erraverint (ut ipse multis versuum millibus ostendit) circa quantitatem diametrorum solis et lunae."

[24] Id., *Candelaio*, edited by Giorgio Bàrberi Squarotti, Einaudi, Turin, 1964, I, XI, pp. 34-35. On the same topics, see also: Ibid., III, I, pp. 56-57. Bruno also talks about certain "Arab astrologers" who tried in vain to extract gold from every metal, for they believed gold to be the spirit of all metals. The Nolan, who agrees primarily with the doctrines of Llull and Geber, considers the theory of those Arabs to be false and makes a distinction between four different categories of metals (instead of one), each of which has its own spirit. Cfr. Id., *De Monade*, V-III, p. 397.

[25] Avicenna is mentioned other three times in the works of Bruno. In a praise of Paracelsus, the Persian philosopher is listed beside Galen as an *auctoritas* on medicine (cfr. Id., *Causa*, III, p. 674). The Nolan also writes that the caliph of Córdoba held Avicenna in esteem (cfr. Id., *De Lampade*, p. 239), In the *Theses de magia*, when Bruno talks about the transmitted influence of God on creation, he also refers to Avicenna's theory of *intentio, which concerns logic, psychology and metaphysics as well. Cfr. Id., Theses de magia, in Id., Opera latine conscripta, v. 3, p. 458 (translation by the author): "Distinguish between the grade of fundaments and the grade of reality; the grade of fundaments is [that] of the second intentions, as well as the grade of reality is given by the first intentions. The second intentions are based on the first [intentions], logic is connected to the first intentions by the second [intentions]. Avicenna in Liber De sufficientia [i.e. The book of healing]."* Intentions are the objects of linguistic significations. In the *Book of healing*, the Persian philosopher makes a distinction between the "first notion of intention" (i.e. the sense of a term or sentence) and the "second notion of intention" (i.e. the property that a term or sentence acquires when it is used in attaining knowledge). On this

5. ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

Beside Avicenna, Bruno mentions other two Muslim philosophers – this time presenting their theories in a more comprehensive way. One of them is Ibn Bajja (c. 1085 - c. 1138), the Latin Avempace. In *De immenso*, Bruno listed him beside the philosophers who supported the finiteness of the cosmos, as he claimed that the eight celestial sphere contains all the others and it is located *per se* at the end of the cosmos[26]. Of course, the Nolan summarized the theory of Avempace in order to criticize it: in his cosmology of infinity, the Aristotelian concept of a last celestial sphere, which cannot be contained by another body, is simply absurd.

Beside Avicenna and Avempace, Bruno knew quite well the Andalusian philosopher Ibn Rushd (1126 - 1198), also known as Averroes. Besides mentioning him quite often in his works, the Nolan was influenced in a consistent way by the thought of the Muslim philosopher of Córdoba. In the following pages, we make a detailed comparison on a theoretical level between these two authors and summarize the main points regarding the Averroism of the Nolan[27].

In the Middle Ages, Averroes was called "the Commentator" by the scholastics because of his deep knowledge of the *Corpus Aristotelicum*. Despite of his critical attitude against peritatetics, the Nolan held the Arab philosopher in esteem for his wisdom:

> "Despite the fact that he [Averroes] was Arab and could not understand Greek, he understood the Aristotelian doctrine better than any other known Greek author; and he would have understood even more, if he hadn't been so addicted to his god Aristotle."[28]

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topic, see: Deborah L. Black, "Intentionality in Medieval Arabic Philosophy", in *Quaestio* 10 (2010), pp. 65-81.

[26] Cfr. Giordano Bruno, *De Immenso*, I, pp. 223-224: "Avempace hispanus, cum Aristotele ultimum coelum octavam sphaeram intelligens stellarum fixarum advectricem, dicit illud esse in loco per accidens, idest, per superficiem proprii corporis convexam, qua septimam, idest, Saturni sphaeram immediate continet, medium respicit universi. […] Universum vero, sicut et ultimum coelum, est in loco per accidens, nempe non per id quod est extra, sed per id quod est intra: sicque concurrit aperte cum Avempace et Themistio, volens coelum iuxta tertiam significationem immediate esse in loco per superficiem extremam totius quod complectitur […]" Even Averroes is listed among those "peripatetics" ho claimed that the cosmos is finite. After all, Avempace has been one of his influences. Bruno does not criticise Averroes like in the case of Avempace, because he claimed that "ultimum coelum, est in loco per accidens, nempe non per id quod est extra, sed per id quod est intra"; however, he does not share his view. The only "peripatetic" who is held in esteem by Bruno in this part of *De immenso* is Thomas Aquinas, although he was a finitist, too.

[27] Many academics already studied the relation between Bruno and Averroes. In the next pages, we summarize the most relevant contents of the following monographs and articles: Felice Tocco, *Le fonti*; Rita Sturlese, "«Averroe quantumque arabo et ignorante di lingua greca»: Note sull'Averroismo di Giordano Bruno", in *Giornale critico della filosofia Italiana* 71 (1992), pp. 248-275; Eugenio Canone, *Giordano Bruno lettore di Averroè*, in Carmela Baffioni (eds.), *Averroes and the Aristotelian Heritage*, Guida, Naples, 2004, pp. 211-247; Miguel Angel Granada, "Maquiavelo y Bruno: Religión civil y crítica del Cristianismo", in *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 4 (1998), pp. 343-368; Id., "«Esser spogliato dall'umana perfezione e giustizia». Nueva evidencia de la presencia de Averroes en la obra y en el proceso de Giordano Bruno", in *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 5 (1999), pp. 305-331; Id., *Giordano Bruno. universo infinito, unión con Dios, perfección del hombre*, Herder, Bacelona, 2002; Antonio Gagliardi, *Scritture e storia: Averroismo e Cristianesimo. Lorenzo de' Medici, Sperone Speroni, Torquato Tasso, Giordano Bruno*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 1998; Id., *Averroismo nel Cinquecento. Da Leone Ebreo a Giordano Bruno*, in Matteo Palumbo & Antonio Saccone (eds.), *Tempo e memoria. Studi in ricordo di Giancarlo Mazzacurati*, Fridericiana Editrice Universitaria, Naples 2000; Gilberto Sacerdoti, *Sacrificio e sovranità. Teologia e politica nell'Europa di Shakespeare e Bruno*, Einaudi, Turin, 2002; Massimo Campanini, *Giordano Bruno e Averroè: Tematiche a confronto*, in Massimiliano Traversino (eds.), *Verità e dissimulazione*, pp. 45-61.

[28] Id., *Causa*, IV, pp. 715-716 (translation by the author). Bruno criticizes the philological approach of the

While the other authors that we mentioned were known by Bruno through secondary sources (with the only exception of Avicenna, maybe), it is almost certain that he read Latin translations of the commentaries of Averroes: in fact, some copies of the renowed Giuntina edition have been found in the library of San Domenico Maggiore in Naples, where the Nolan used to study during his novitiate. Moreover, it is acknowledged that Bruno knew *The Incoherence of the Incoherence* by Averroes, as he mentions it in *De immenso*. He probably read the Latin translation (dated 1327) of Calonymos ben Calonymos, a Jew who worked on commission for king Robert of Anjou.

Averroes wrote *The incoherence of the incoherence* to defend the philosophers against the arguments of al-Ghazali, who criticized Greek philosophical doctrines to support those of theologians; for example, to defend the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, al-Ghazali denied the possibility of the eternity of the world. Averroes claimed that the contraddictions between philosophical and theological doctrines like these are indeed just apparent: according to him, they are basically linguistic problems, which can be solved on the level of denomination (*tasmiyya*[29]). Also Bruno agreed on the eternity of the world and considered the arguments of al-Ghazali to be weak[30]; unlike Averroes, though, he did not make great efforts to harmonize his philosophical theories with those of Christian theologians.

Leaving aside theological controversies, Bruno and Averroes share the same point of view on the function of religion: for both of them, religion is a necessary cultural system for society, especially as regards its moral implications. The Arab wrote that "religious laws are *necessary political arts*, the principles of which are taken from natural reason and inspiration, especially in what is common to all religions"[31] and later Bruno meant the same in *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, when the character of Jupiter says: "I don't want that it [the triumphant beast, i.e. the personification of vices] to have the chance to destroy what is excellent and dignified, which consists in *what is necessary to the republic of the world*"[32]. It is difficult to establish whether Averroes really influenced the Nolan on this point, but their views are the same. Bruno already talked about the practical role of religion in the *Ash Wednesday Supper*:

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humanists, which he considers less efficient than the philosophical one. A similar opinion has been expressed by Pico della Mirandola and later by Vincenzo Colle da Sarno, an early teacher of Bruno. Cfr. Bertrand Levergeois, *Giordano Bruno*, op. cit., pp. 199-200. Averroes is also mentioned as "a certain Arab [who] stated that the theory of nature in your works [those of Onorio, the reincarnation of Aristotle] is the final effort to show the most clear, pure, high and curious genius ever"; Giordano Bruno, *Cabala*, II-III, p. 460 (translation by the author).

[29] Cfr. Massimo Campanini, "Giordano Bruno e Averroè", pp. 47-51.

[30] Cfr. Giordano Bruno, *De Immenso*, I, pp. 217-218: "Alchazeles arabs mahumetanus theologus, a quo et quidam Christianorum didicere, irrefragabile in *libro destructionum* [*Philosophiae Algazelis*] contra aeternitarios adducit argumentum ex eo, quod oporteret infinitos duodecies plures fuisse annos quam menses, trigesies circiter plures menses quam dies, quatuor supra viginti vicibus plures dies quam horas. Unde cadit simile argumentum contra immensitatem universi, et mundorum innumerabilitatem: quia plures essent tellures quam soles, et deinceps alia mille. In cuius puerilis argumenti et omnino (quia est ab extraneo inconvenienti) alieni, solutione *in libro destructionis destructionum* nescio quam feliciter laboret Averroes. Sed nos hanc stultitiam in iis, quae de minimi existentia et contemplatione dicta sunt, fusius elusimus."

[31] Averroes, *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, tr. Simon Van den Bergh, retrieved from http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ir/tt/, 05/08/2017, ch. *About the natural sciences* IV. Note: this online-source is structured into chapters and it does not have page-references.

[32] Giordano Bruno, *Spaccio*, III-III, p. 384 (translation and italics by the author). On Giordano Bruno and his view about the practical purpose of the religious laws, see also Ibid., I-III, pp. 236 ff.

> "[…] that's the reason why philosopher, pontiff and Muslim theologian al-Ghazali claimed that the purpose of [religious] laws isn't the pursuit of truth and speculation, but the goodness of social practice, the profit of civilization, the peaceful coexistence of peoples and the practice for a convenient human dialogue, the preservation of peace and the increase of republics."[33]

As Granada points out, here the Nolan quotes al-Ghazali, but this is just "a trick to mention *a contrario* the real source of Bruno, who's none other than Averroes, he who replied to al-Ghazali in the *Destructio destructionum* and developed the concept of religion which has been inherited by Bruno through the Latin translation of this work and the Averroistic tradition"[34]. Averroes was an *auctoritas* on Aristotelianism, but his own views were still considered to be dangerous by Christian theologians. Averroes got a bad reputation in the West especially after the condemnations of French bishop Tempier against Averroists in 1270 and 1277. We assume that Bruno intentionally replaced him with al-Ghazali, who had a better reputation among the Latins, to get some more attention. Anyway, shall not forget that the purpose of Bruno was mainly to claim that "the true, civil and well-educated philosophers always supported religions, because they knew that faith is required to rule rude peoples which shall be ruled"[35].

On a practical level, the most effective religious dogma is the belief in life after death – without which religions would not even exist. That principle leads the believers to take a view to what comes after life and consequently behave in accordance with the religious law. Averroes talked about this topic when answering to al-Ghazali, who accused philosophers not to believe in resurrection. The Andalusian philosopher did not make clear if resurrection is corporeal or spiritual only, but he did not deny this dogma. He even supported its validity by stating that such a doctrine is attested by the gospels and by old pagan beliefs, as well[36] – not to agree with disbelievers, but rather to highlight that in different religions moral systems are grounded on the concept of resurrection:

> "But the philosophers in particular, as is only natural, regard this doctrine as most important and believe in it most, and the reason is that it is conducive to an order amongst men on which man's being, as man, depends and through which he can attain the greatest happiness proper to him, for it is a necessity for the existence of the moral and speculative virtuess and of the practical sciences in men. They hold namely that man cannot live in this world without the practical sciences, nor in this and the next world without the speculative virtues, and that neither of these categories is perfected or completed without the practical virtues, and that the practical virtues can only become strong through the knowledge and adoration of God by the services prescribed by the laws of the different religions, like offerings and prayers and supplications and other such utterances by which praise is rendered to God, the angels, and the prophets."[37]

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[33] Id., *Cena*, IV, p. 103 (translation by the author).

[34] Cfr. Miguel Angel Granada, "Maquiavelo y Bruno", p. 356.

[35] Giordano Bruno, *De l'infinito, universo e mondi*, edited by Jean Seidengart, in Id., *Opere italiane*, v. 2, p. 52 (translation by the author).

[36] Cfr. Averroes, *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, ch. *About the natural sciences* IV: "Having finished this question Ghazali begins to say that the philosophers deny bodily resurrection. This is a problem which is not found in any of the older philosophers, although resurrection has been mentioned in different religions for at least a thousand years and the philosophers whose theories have come to us are of a more recent date. The first to mention bodily resurrection were the prophets of Israel after Moses, as is evident from the Psalms and many books attributed to the Israelites. Bodily resurrection is also affirmed in the New Testament and attributed by tradition to Jesus. It is a theory of the Sabaeans, whose religion is according to Ibn Hazm the oldest."

[37] Ivi.

Bruno, who believed in the transmigration of the soul, could not use similar arguments to support his view on the practical role of religion. Anyway, as we have seen before, he stressed the necessity and importance of virtues – even though the principles he wanted to raise to the sky were not the three theological virtues of Christianity. Just like in the case of Averroes, Bruno and the theologians of his time had different views.

Another similarity between these two authors is that they both believed that philosophy makes it possible to conduct a (never-ending) process of improvement in the pursuit of happiness and perfection. However, in their opinion, only an élite of intellectuals is able to seek the truth using the philosophical method; furthermore, such a method shall not be applied by the common people, for it would only lead to misunderstandings. Averroes shared the same idea. On this topic, Bruno mentions the philosopher of Córdoba (again beside al-Ghazali) in *The Heroic Frenzies*:

> "Here we can find nine reasons to explain why human mind is blind to the divine object […] The fourth, which is explained in the following lines, isn't as unworthy as the one which arises from the habit to believe to false opinions of the common people, which is disregarded by the opinions of philosophers, or at least arises from the study of pseudo-philosophies which are considered to be true by the moltitude as much as they are close to common sense. This habit is one of the greatest and hardest problems which can be found: because (as al-Ghazali and Averroes pointed out) it happens to them something similar to those who used to eat poison since childhood and youth and got used to it […] and, on the contrary, they refuse what has a good and sweet taste by nature."[38]

Common people get used to "eat poison": they base their own opinions on common sense, superstition and religion. Apart from their practical role, the Nolan considered religions to be far from the truth. In his view, the only "true religion" is the mythical cult of Hermes Trismegistus, whose wisdom was believed to be the source of the philosophy of Socrates and Plato. Though, only an élite of philosophers can recognize "what has a good and sweet taste" and "the Actaeons who are destined to contemplate the naked Diana are very rare"[39]: that's the reason why the "true arguments […] are not disclosed by us to common people, but only to the wise men who have the key to understand the meaning of our speeches"[40]. The Nolan makes a distinction between a philosophical and a religious truth in the Averroistic way. As Rita Sturlese points out in her study, the Nolan "*inherits from Averroes the concept of theoretical inferiority of religion, even though he's aware of the need of it, or rather of its fundamental role for social life. […] His refusal to retract his philosophical arguments under request of the Inquisition was also a sign of loyalty to the teaching of Averroes*"[41]. In fact, before Bruno, also Averroes made a distinction between philosophers and common people (and theologians as a third category, as well) on the basis of their method of interpretation applied to the sacred scriptures. Philosophers can

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[38] Giordano Bruno, *Furori*, IV, pp. 344-347 (translation by the author). By this quote, it is possible that Bruno really believed that al-Ghazali's view was similar to that of Averroes, for some reason. The same poison-metaphor can be found in other works of Bruno. Cfr. Id., *Acrotismus Camoeracensis*, in Id., *Opera latine conscripta*, edited by Francesco Fiorentino, v. 1, p. 1, Domenico Morano, Naples, 1879, p. 58-59: "Sicut enim (adiicit illius Commentator Averroes) qui veneno vesci consueverunt, ea perhibentur facultate praediti, ut tum ipso tamquam proprio cibo reficiantur, tum consequenter quod caeteris est vitale, atque medicina, idipsum sibi exitiale experiantur." As Nicoletta Tirinnanzi points out, the same metaphor is present in other works of the Nolan (also without explicit reference to Averroes). Cfr. Id., *Furori*, p. 358, n. 51.

[39] Id., *Furori*, II, p. 300 (translation by the author).

[40] Id., *Infinito*, I, p. 51 (translation by the author).

[41] Rita Sturlese, "Note sull'Averroismo di Giordano Bruno", p. 275 (translation by the author).

understand the meaning of the text on a deepest level by applying the demonstrative method. In the hands of common people, the same method can only lead to dangerous misunderstandings, for not everyone is able to apply it in a proper way:

> "[…] demonstrative method is too difficult for most men, even for those who possess by nature a sound understanding, although such men are very scarce. But to discuss these questions with the masses is like bringing poisons to the bodies of many animals, for which they are real poisons. Poisons, however, are relative, and what is poison for one animal is nourishment for another. The same applies to ideas in relation to men; that is, there are ideas which are poison for one type of men, but which are nourishment for another type. […] But when the wicked and ignorant transgress and bring poison to the man for whom it is really poison, as if it were nourishment, then there is need of a physician who through his science will exert himself to heal that man, and for this reason we have allowed ourselves to discuss this problem in such a book as this […]"[42]

Here we can find the same "poison-metaphor" which was later used by Bruno. Its original meaning is slightly different, though. In fact, there is a difference between the two authors: Averroes was *not* Averroist, despite of the reputation he got from the 13th century onwards. Unlike Bruno, he would have never agreed with the double-truth theory: in fact, he believed the truth of philosophy and that of the Quran to be the same and he tried to harmonize them. It is not clear whether the Nolan misinterpreted the theory of the Commentator or simply adapted it to his own purposes – most probably his misinterpretation is intentional. Despite of this point of difference, Averroes is surely the most influential Islamic figure in relation to the thought of the Nolan.

CONCLUSION

Averroism had an important role in the Western philosophical tradition – probably more in the Renaissance, rather than in the Middle Ages, when it was a new cultural phenomenon. Averroism must have had a remarkable influence on Bruno, as we highlighted in the previous paragraph: not only the double-truth theory, but also the doctrine of the unity of the intellect may have a connection with his pantheism and his concept of *anima mundi*. In fact, the philosophical system of the Nolan is based on the idea that God is nature: according to this premise, God can know nothing else but Himself. Along with the double-truth theory, also this doctrine has been strongly criticized by bishop Tempier and by Thomas Aquinas, whose position about this topic is clarified in *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*[43].

Beside Averroes and the authors that we mentioned in the previous pages, we do not know whether the Nolan knew other aspects of the Islamic tradition or not. We analyzed the majority of the explicit references to figures and themes of the Islamic tradition in the works of Giordano Bruno. In conclusion, we can say that his overall picture of Islam is quite vague – the same goes for the most of European intellectuals in the Reinassaince. The Nolan lists Shias and Arabs beside Indians and other peoples of distant lands: it means that the religion and the lifestyle of all these peoples is something exotic in his eyes. Bruno does not know

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[42] Averroes, *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, ch. 7.

[43] In his *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*, Thomas Aquinas criticized the Averroistic double-truth theory and wrongly associated it to Averroes. Anyway, we make clear that Averroes wasn't Averroist, for he never talked about two distinct truths, but only one. For more information about this debate, see: Antonio Petagine, "Il *De Unitate Intellectus* di Tommaso d'Aquino e la "doppia verità"" in *B@belonline/print* 9 (2011), pp. 89-100.

into detail the Islamic doctrine and the only time that he mentions Allah, he apparently does it to support the doctrine of the *prisca theologia*.

Nevertheless, Bruno showed a remarkable interest in the aspects of Islamic culture which spread in the West: as we have seen before, he had a great esteem for Muslim polymaths like Geber, Avempace and Averroes (not to list the "Arab" Avicebron). He was more interested in the scientific and philosophical aspects of the Islamic tradition, rather than to Islam and its doctrine. In the view of Bruno, the real truth is philosophical, while the religious truth is only relative, for "the same scripture is in the hands of Jews, Christians and Muslims; those cults are so different and conflictual that they give birth to other uncountable very different and conflictual cults, each of which have the purpose which they like the most"[44].

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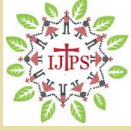**ABSTRACT AND INDEX**- IJTPS is abstracted and indexed in:
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