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Investigating the terms of transition
from a dialogue to dialectics in Plato's *Charmides*

Abstract: In this article, following the introductory chapters of the Platonic dialogue *Charmides* (153a1-154b7), we attempt to investigate the terms of transition from a simple dialogue to dialectics. Interpreting the expressive means used, we attempt to explain how Plato goes from historicity to systematicity, in order to create the appropriate conditions to build a definition about a fundamental virtue as well as to set the criteria to be followed in a philosophical debate. Our study is divided in two sections, each of which is also divided in two subsections. In the first section, we investigate the historical context of the dialogue and the terms of transition from a single dialogue to dialectics. In the second section, we attempt to define according to Socrates' judgments the mental and moral quality of the young men as well as the terms and conditions of the right interlocutor. At the end of each section, we present a table of concepts to bring to light the conceptual structures that Plato builds, which reveal the philosophical development in this dialogue.

Key-words: Plato, *Charmides*, dialogue, dialectics, historicity, systematicity

Introduction

The *Charmides*, at least as to its form, is included in the first period of Plato's literary activity, since it involves Socrates and an unknown interlocutor. Yet, it is a dialogue that follows the method of nested stories, for Socrates is presented as someone who describes in indirect speech the argumentation on *sophrosyne* (temperance) that was used by him, Chairephon, Critias and the young beautiful Charmides. The debate is supposed to have taken place immediately after the Athenian philosopher came back from Potidea in 432 BC. The place of that debate is the palaistra of Taureas, where the protagonist meets some old friends and acquaintances. Taking into consideration that Socrates, at the age between forty and fifty, is presented as a man who becomes a friend or a special consultant of young men, or, their mentor, the main question raised at the beginning of the dialogue is whether there are any young men who excel at wisdom and beauty, or even both. In fact, the topic of the dialogue rebuilds the famous Platonic model of searching for a definition – in the sense not only of giving a particular name but also of defining moral thought and action, that is, a prolific combination of the Theoretical with the Practical Reason –, an attempt that leads to identifying a particular virtue, in this case self-control and self-awareness, with the

knowledge of good[1]. The whole discussion proceeds inductively and deductively, so the actual question discussed is about the holistic virtue as a requirement for young politicians. Due to this holistic nature of virtue the *Charmides* could be easily described as a precursor of Plato's middle dialogues. Furthermore, since, as already mentioned, the topic of the dialogue is about building a definition related with moral behaviors, both individually and collectively, the purpose is actually to define a moral ideal, which is approached through the process of understanding the relations that should be developed between political factors. It is to be mentioned here that the concept "political" is used to describe the all kinds of relationship in a state and not primarily the relationships of its institutions.

In this study, we shall investigate the introductory chapters of the dialogue (153a1-154b7), in which the place and time are presented as well as the young protagonist, Charmides, who, according to Critias' words, combines beauty with temperance. The first aspect will allow us to follow the psychological reactions of the persons; therefore, we will be able to compose the general circumstances, which, on the occasion of the information about the result of a battle that unites in a patriotic way, built an atmosphere full of intense emotions. In our view, analyzing the language and style of Socrates' first monologue will make possible an approach of the historical aspect, which will show us whether and to what degree we can pass on to the systematic one, in order to cover the theoretical course as well. The question to be raised is formed as follows: is this course defined by the criterion of participation in what takes place in the story? What is more: does the interpretation and meta-interpretation of the expressive means affect this course? Generally, when studying a period with intense political characteristics it is mandatory to investigate whether the expressive means reveal not the general spirit of a state but imaginary of it as formed by those who are parts of it. Or, else, we shall attempt to investigate whether it is possible to change historicity into experience and, subsequently, experience into systematicity as a coherent thought process, which includes a definition as well.

The fact that Plato's most important tool of forming his theories is dialogue leads us to discuss the topic of dialectics as a transition from dialogue to its epistemological foundations. In Plato's first dialogues, the purpose is to find the right usage of that dialogue which aims at expressing a definition of a particular virtue, and, by means of it, at revealing a course for establishing holistic virtue[2]. In fact, the first episode – essentially Socrates' monologue – does not reveal the complicated procedures of dialectics. However, it is a necessary preparation, which, as we will prove, sets the bases of a good communication. Therefore, this elaboration will give us the opportunity to systematically define the charac-

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1   For an analysis of this topic in the *Charmides*, cf. Richard McKim, "Socratic Self-Knowledge and 'Knowledge of Knowledge' in Plato's Charmides", *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-2014)* 115 (1985): 59-77. On the relationship of self-knowledge, as it is defined in the *Charmides*, with contemporary reality, cf. Paul Stern, "Tyranny and Self-Knowledge: Critias and Socrates in Plato's Charmides", *The American Political Science Review* 93/2 (1999): 399-412.

2   On a proleptic reading of the first Platonic dialogues and especially the *Charmides,* cf. Charles H. Kahn, "Plato's Charmides and the Proleptic Reading of Socratic Dialogues", *The Journal of Philosophy* 85/10 (1988): 541-549.

teristics of a single dialogue in comparison to the complex process of dialectics that aims at revealing the objective truth.

The second goal of ours is related to this: is it possible Socrates' question on the intellectual and moral quality of the young Athenians as well as Charmides' arrival to bring readers closer to systematicity and definition? Thus, we shall attempt to show exactly the terms of this transition to the endeavor of theorizing, which reveals the tendency of the Platonic thought to renew its socio-political and scientific perspective. Or, else, we shall attempt to show how Plato decides to criticize the existing socio-political status through discussing the combination of beautiful-good man in relation to the holistic virtue, which passes through the debate about temperance, which is the theoretical topic of this dialogue[3]. And the best way for this change is the young men who are going to hold important positions on public life. So, investigating whether Plato expresses modern or even radical suggestions for the political future of Athens broadens the question.

On this basis, the main question of this study is which are the terms of a philosophical debate, which are described in the first lines of the *Charmides*, and which are those empirical perspectives that can be transformed by Plato into theoretical. What is more, what is the role of the expressive forms and the grammatical and syntactic means in turning a dialogue into dialectics and how are the mental procedures activated in the process of analyzing questions? In this context, how the "remarkable" can be defined and how can this exceed superficial? It is to be mentioned that any judgments can constitute the basis of the episode that follows, without this excluding the following. Finally, we shall attempt to reveal the terms and conditions of "communication" in its first phase, so as to have an idea of whether it brings a message or a piece of information or feeds broader questions. Note also that at the end of each chapter there will be a table of concepts to show the conceptual richness and the semantic structures formed by Plato according to the content of these concepts. These tables will help us to detect the depth of the philosophical development in this specific Platonic dialogue.

1.1. Historical context of the dialogue

In Socrates' first narrative monologue, there is a detailed presentation of the space, time, actions and emotional states of every subject-protagonist and a description of the developing communicative relations between the interlocutors – even in a vague and spontaneous way at first[4]. Yet, the background of this communication is placed in the past, and involves a collectivity defined by the open perspective of the protagonists. It is to be mentioned that the intensity of these descriptions depends on the special nature of every person, which obviously is affected by the emotional changes or even their expectations, two factors which compose the psychological aspect of their reactions. Or, else, these are behaviors that are

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3 On how the virtue of temperance is defined in this dialogue as well as on the meaning that it receives in Plato's later dialogues, cf. Matthias Vorwerk, "Definitions of ΣΩΦΡΟΣΥΝΗ in Plato's Charmides and in Plotinus Enneads 1.2 (19)", *The American Journal of Philology* 122/1 (2001): 29-47.

4 Cf. *Charmides*, 153a1-d1.

not predictable in the first place, although this does not indicate that an experienced observer will be surprised by them. Thus, a special historicity is formed, which, even imperceptibly by the protagonists, becomes clear in every respect, as based on the gradual dominance of particularity or, in a manner of speaking, human geography in its exemplifications, namely the anthropogeography.

Furthermore, taking into account the typical geographical references, the description has a basis: the discussion about the battle in Potidea. It is quite likely that it takes some imagination as well as narration to cover the lack of the objective experience of those who did not take part in this battle. In fact, the presentation of the emotional states and reactions appears through some unexpected or random events or engages how they have surprised the protagonists or made them to change their expectations-direction – or even lack of interest – to that moment. The fact that this is not about a precise match of the details of the event with the reactions of the subjects needs to be investigated, so that to be approached in right terms. With regard to the information, the realism of the description has to be preserved. Yet, unpredictability is a fact to face, it has to do with relativism and actually broadens it at the same time as it forms the terms of historicity, although there are no systematic aspects, or, in other words, the inner procedures of the protagonists have not been yet formed. Regardless of the sudden or, at least, unexpected character of that event, it is mostly about its natural function of this very fact, which is one of those that could shape the current development of the collective procedures. All the reactions are placed in an explosive emotional state experienced by the persons, who are considered as the bodies of a particular origin before the unexpected, which is not surprising at all. They are Athenian citizens who are interested in the outcome of a battle in which the army of their city participated and that is why they react patriotically.

A typical thing of their psychographic diversity is the adverbs used, which interact with the functional intensity of the verbs. They also stress historicity, which in this context develops in two axes. First and foremost, it appears, perhaps indirectly, as a human condition being under a permanent formation, which goes through various emotions. Secondly, in the context of the narration it is considered as the regulatory intention of the texts, which as a posteriori include a particular aspect of the past, and become a source of information for those who listen-read. At this point, the importance of the events arises as well as what is their meaning or what meaning do they receive. The texts are supposed to replace events with a narration and that is why they appertain – obviously both by intention and necessity – to specific circumstances that can cause interest or raise questions. Apparently, these are expressed without violating objectivity – even if they add or remove information –, what has really happened, for the precision of the narration and the meanings derived from it have to be preserved. Note that Thucydides had already defined the rules of objectivity of a text. More specifically: it is not easy to discover the purpose of the text under examination, since the facts in Potidea that it describes, as living beings, had formed a dynamic context for all those who participated. Exactly the opposite context is found in Athens, since this particular – or any other – company of people involves some kind of psychological discontinuity or even incompatibility, for they did not take part in the facts that will be described.

Therefore, particularly detailed and thorough expressive means have to be used in the text, which should be developed – and approached – in two ways, with regard to the event described and the predicted, to some extent, reactions of the persons who will be informed about it, even not completely. This is an important aspect especially for the man who in the first place seems that he will hold a key role and regulate the whole progress. That will be Socrates, who participates in the a priori and has to form the a posteriori information or knowledge in the field of narration-evidence. So, as he stands in a place with many other people, who clearly wish to know more, he has to mingle with them appropriately and make the right salutations, which also reveal emotions or psychological procedures. Therefore, communicating with known and strangers reveals a realistic and particularly gentle attitude and it is highly possible that it is a proof of that he is not arrogant at all, for, as a spiritual and publicly acting person, he is quite modest. He does not make any discrimination in who he will speak to. In addition, his greetings show a natural politeness and aim at a nice intended communication. Regardless of how much someone is involved in the social activities of his state, it is not possible for him to know everyone that he meets. Yet, he believes that it is not appropriate to ignore them as long as they are present in the place that he visits. Tradition confirms that he was a person who constantly sought to communicate with his fellow citizens, under strict terms and conditions.

Yet, the last two sentences of the monologue are clearly exaggerating, for they obviously are affected by an emotional explosion; this shows the internal and long-standing friendship or strong communication between some of the protagonists[5]. After a period of absence, it is unavoidable to have an intense personal interest, even if the beloved person did not participate in the front line of the battle. The psychological reactions shape the general atmosphere, which actually cannot be completely described in a text. Plato as the author of the text has to persuade his future readers for everything that took place, in which they were not present and their experience-knowledge will result only from the description. So, it is necessary the text, as a factor of an update, to cover the distance from the facts, which have to be described appropriately so as the functional presence of the persons regarding the projection of the actions performed by them to be ensured-justified. The whole subject-matter becomes more intense if we consider that the narrator and observer of the facts took part, at least to some extent, in their formation. The responsibility of Socrates, who represents a particular direction within a broader direction, seems to end here. Or else, in addition to the description, the text turns to the future readers and, by utilizing imagination, which forms a great context beyond comparison, has to transform them, as far as possible, into observers or even participants from a different perspective. Clearly, Plato has to be evaluated for both these directorial attempts – including the two levels of the readers –, which shape the psychological atmosphere for the subsequent theoretical directions.

The following episode develops through brief questions and answers and passes information expediently; this reveals the mutual interest between the interlocutors and not

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5 Cf. *Charmides*, 153b2-6.

a possible intention to get the news by force[6]. Or, it could be said that these questions extend the intention to transmit personal emotions. Nevertheless, the procedures follow an evaluative distinction so that the appropriate choice-decision to differentiate over the less important things. A long description might disorientate from an intentional communicative prospect, since it would involve other elements as well, which were not among the expectations of that moment. On the other hand, we may not exclude the possibility that the non-critical points of interest that would arise from a gradual development of a conventional atmosphere that would result from solely superficial questions can set aside the person who is the center of attention. Therefore, the most important is that attention does not only focus on the events, in actually automatic terms, but also on how they were formed by the subjects that produced them or took part in them. There is a constant recognition of the importance of the personal factor as a former-protagonist of history, which points to an example of an open society with democratic political institutions and cultural inclusions, elements by which one becomes able to approach thoroughly subjectivity, so that to avoid isolated self-eroticism. Or, else, the term "subject" refers to participation, and includes the person who is the narrator as well. In what follows, these will become clearer. Note also that this somehow impulsive explosion has to be interpreted with psychological or at least emotional criteria, on the basis of the quality of a selfhood that can be easily justified in every person, provided that this very person seeks the essential.

Considering the expressive means, verbs dominate in this part of the dialogue and contribute – due to the dynamic status and the initiatives that they reveals – to a rapid development. They cause an impulse for dramatic interchanges and reflect, as far as possible, the description of the preceding events and the personality or character of the interlocutors who are responsible for represent or revive them into the imaginary world of the creative hypotheses. The first of these parts intends to bring to light those details that will illuminate an already occurred fact, and that is why some reconstructions, caused by the time distance between the actual time and the description, are inevitable. Therefore, a new form of historicity arises, which includes a thorough experientiality, which raises demands for a precise and indicative expressive mean related with a particular interpretative expectation. The narrator will illuminate the events through his own perspective as well or through the decomposition of the meanings and their extensions that he has in mind or according to the dominant criterion of the already existing interpretation – or, maybe, evaluation – or even on the basis of how strong is his memory, which as a complicated kind of recollection is clearly connected with the demand for a structured description. Socrates is presented as an eyewitness and someone who took part in the events, so he is the only source to clarify unclear things to his interlocutors that have been caused by the fact that they were personally absent from the time and place in which these events took place. The re-compositions that will occur by him and will result from the mental elaboration by the listeners

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6   Cf. *Charmides*, 153b7-c6. For a thorough analysis of this extract, cf. Noa L. Ayalon, "'Exactly as you see me' (Charmides 153b8). The function of Narration in Plato's Charmides", *Journal of Ancient Philosophy (Sao Paolo)* 12/1 (2018): 179-191.

will form new meanings during the description, a world of an imperceptibly formed imaginary reconstruction.

It is highly possible that the description indicates simpler meanings, which also need to be expressed. What really takes place, however, is defined by the inner conditions of the interlocutors, which are difficult to be approached, for they are explosively-automatically changing, even by them. The former relevant stories maybe were not clear enough and caused cognitive confusions, so, Socrates becomes a protagonist who will provide the appropriate information and will fill in the gaps. Therefore, those whom the Athenian philosopher meets show that they are interested in the events, so their positive psychological condition is the basis for the development of the discussion, regardless of what will be the following direction. Emotional mutuality indicates the spiritual and communicative environment composed by decent and mature syllogistic procedures[7]. Furthermore, it is to be mentioned that this is an important political and military event for the power of Athens in the broader Hellenic geopolitical area, and that is why there is so much interest in it. It is also a matter of patriotic pride, which motivates the collective consciousness, or even unconsciousness, for definitions that aim at bringing into light qualitative, comparatively speaking, properties.

Finally, as regards hierogeography, it is to be stressed that the sanctum of the Royal Porch mentioned in the text incarnates the former Greek reign within the mnemonic tradition[8]. Codrus and Nileus were honored in this place. Going back in the past is actually important, for at least it indicates the vital relationship of the Athenians with traditional structures that have been formed by their common experiences and have defined their special culture. Therefore, Athens appears as a spiritual and political continuum, a crucial parameter for its self-awareness and self-identification. In other words, it owns internal terms of justifying its democratic and liberal autonomy that it has claimed for itself, under the terms and conditions established by a continuous modernity addressed not only to its current condition but also to the tradition of its historical definition. The stability of the sanctum ensures in valid criteria any new choice to be made.

1.2. Dialectics. The course from a single dialogue to its epistemological foundations: The terms of the right use of dialogue

The opening of this Platonic work, as indicated from the context, does not serve a faster development of the subject under discussion towards the main topic. At first sight, it actually seems that it does not have any connection to its special content, for the description of a historical event dominates over the development of ideas-synthetic judgements of Socrates' communication-practice, which was drastically typical of his attitude. Plato, by presenting a formally declarative and narrative episode, succeeds in making known – on a first level – some qualities of the simple dialogue with no further demands, which reveal that its meaning is less important from a complex dialectical thought process, which cor-

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[7] For a thorough study on this transition, cf. Thomas M. Tuozzo, *Positive Elenchus in a "Socratic" Dialogue* (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 101-110.

[8] Cf. *Charmides*, 153a4.

responds to more essential methodological and scientific purposes, capable of forming a coherent and complete theory. The discussion elaborated here leaves no room for deeper mental processing or for extensions in meanings resulting from interpretative and axiological judgements, since it relies on Socrates' and his interlocutors' intense feelings. Reactions here are based on partial surprises, questions and enthusiastic responses, but there are no extreme behaviors. It could be generally argued that intense emotions are excluded by definition, or at least by the process of self-adjustments, by the processional expression of objective or logical meanings, such as the strict dialectical thought, which aims at an understanding of the truth in terms of rationality. It would be strange a discussion that aims at truth and, therefore, needs to come through objectivity, either intentionally or not, to develop with ambiguity and vague meanings. Nevertheless, in the sense of a preparation, it is definitely considered to be a necessary process, for it would free the spirited part of the interlocutors' souls from any possible tension and it would reveal how important communication is in the process of discovering the truth that is related with the topics in progress.

All those present in the palaestra open a channel of communication with the famous philosopher to get answers or to cure their curiosity about the event of the battle, which took place in Potidea and they did not witness. Socrates, who was there and took part in the events in Potidea, undertakes to inform the crowd and spread the news. So, in this context dialogue is used as a way of making known the news, in opposition to dialectics, which does not turn into a tool but keeps its own value and autonomous constitutive reason. This kind of thinking does not insist so much on the current events but on how they can be put conceptually into categorical schemata, either pre-existing or newly formed. Yet, irrespectively of the topic to be elaborated, historical continuum provides human consciousness with the mental imagery to form the terms of thoughtful discourses, which require particular, as a special entity, before any abstract procedures. Nominalism is dominates, at least to a point, and sets the objective conditions to anything that can be perceived.

Yet, this distinction does not reduce the value of the dialogue, which preserves some remarkable qualities, mostly related to the content of the description. Those who make the questions do not repeat the same question, contributing in this way to the development of the discussion, and avoiding the risk of monotony, which generally excludes an essential participation with qualitative interests in a meeting. On the other hand, Socrates' answers are brief and clear, so, the requirement for a somehow historical geography is fulfilled, for he does not add any elements that could disorientate, even temporarily. The person who will make known the events is not an accidental choice, since he was a witness of the battle and someone who took part in the process. Socrates appears, more or less, as a historical human being who actively formed together with others an event, even though he was obliged by the laws of his state to participate in the battle. His objectively relevant capability of confirming or disproving empirically any information the Athenians have to this point, make their purpose – that is, to find the truth or at least some validated information about this event – more than feasible. Therefore, the whole discussion does not leave room for unclear words and irrational expressions, but focuses on a common request, which the interlocutors attempt – through the discussion – to reach by making mindful steps.

Nevertheless, any deeper approach and analysis of this common request would need dialectics, which, however, would aim at discovering truth as an authentic epistemological value. War is subject to a particular psychopathology, to a peculiar interpretation of belonging, acting, owing, asserting and competing, in the context of general geopolitical strategies, to which indirect psychological expectations have been added. Therefore, it is not possible to complete a description only by presenting the details that have to do with places or time or the protagonists. As a selectable field or a field that has to be selected, it requires a thorough philosophical approach, to which the anthropological constants and how they appear in the historical and cultural continuum hold a key role. For instance, one could conceptually study topics such as necessity or the objectively unjustified of the war, the political and military powers of Athens or the general subject of the unity of the Greek genus, of the Greek city-states, which would put in margins civil war. Besides, the experiences from the Peloponnesian War were traumatic. But the conditions are still in an introductory level. In this passage, there appears a proper, in introductory terms, usage of the dialogue by the interlocutors in relation to the event, the information of which could be also covered by a monologue and could be decorated by more or less subjective emotions and feelings. It is to be mentioned that this is a strong possibility for the benefit of any subjective purpose, regardless of the objective validity of the elements used during it. The latter, however, may not found in a Platonic text in the context of the objectives that it sets to form the approaches attempted in a transcendent sense, which constantly aim at a detailed reading of the events independently of their content, the revealing of the personal capabilities and the hard attempts for corresponding of the concepts, as products of the mind, to being. Therefore, it is quite rational to eventually detect dialectical objectives in this chapter as well, implicitly located to a context that needs to be further investigated, expressed in a simple and narrative mode.

Table of contents in section 153a1-153d1[9]

ἀληθές: epistemological (1)

ἀσμένως: emotional (1)

βασιλικός: religious, cultural (1)

διατριβή: attentive, entertaining (1)

μανικός: emotional, psychological (1)

μάχη: militaristic, martial (4)

παλαίστρα: athletic (1)

στοά: cultural, religious (1)

στρατόπεδον: militaristic, martial (2)

χρόνος: cosmological, measuring (1)

2.1. Socrates investigates the mental and moral quality of the young people

Exactly because Socrates appears to have no intention of further discussing the events of the battle in Potidea, which, as will be made quite clear, have little relation with the subject of the treatise – and for reasons of direction they worked as an introduction to define the time and place and to start the discussion –, he uses the adverb "ἅδην" (enough) to con-

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9 In this section, we present the concept as it appears in the text, we then characterize it and within the parenthesis we note how many time it appears, namely the frequency.

clude this part as well as the emotional expressions of those being there[10]. However, the instrumental use of this adverb does not interfere only as an inhibitory invention, but also reveals Socrates' willingness to direct the discussion to theoretical subjects more pleasant, which, in this case, are the education of young men and the philosophical development and investigation[11]. It is now more obvious that, regardless of the particular social spirit of the state, there is a preference to theoretical topics that probably appertain to regulatory terms. So, it is to be mentioned that the discussion will be about great intellectual activities, which, under a new perspective, take into consideration the social terms as well. Note also that Socrates-Plato are the leading representatives of the enlightenment, which suggests renewal of the socio-political and scientific field, a combination that ensures equal prospects for cultural creation with various branches. Thus, under this compositional perspective, any reference to the new generation will aim to expand with special questions the qualitative content, and to include, as much as possible, anything related to the future of the state that is considered to be the place in which history is transformed, according to the example of the Ancient Greek Enlightenment.

It is likely that Plato refers indirectly to the problems of Athens during the fourth century B.C., which prevent the state from bringing forth the right conditions for opening the spiritual horizon. Therefore, these references seek clearly those factors that cause changes towards better conditions and restore the political and cultural reputation of Athens. So, their exponent does not remain in providing information at the same time as he does not describe a conventional proposal on the regulatory principles that should govern education and general life of young people. The entire question leads to a deeper spiritual concern, to a though process that follows the somehow transcendent objectives of abstraction. The question is now clear: what are the terms of the new possibilities? In this spirit, Socrates raises another question about whether these young men that his interlocutors will focus on own some properties and, specifically, whether their quality is reflected either in them or in their appearance. He also makes his question more specific, foe he asks for explanations to whether some of these young men are superior to the rest in relation to these qualities, an axiological question which eliminates the risk of making everything even. Whether the virtue of courage is implied is a possibility that should not be ruled out, since Socrates himself had externalized it to the battle of Potidea. Does the reference to the external beauty raises questions about its relationship with the virtues, and, more specifically, with courage?

In this sense, one could suppose that originally, through comparisons, the issue on the relationship of being with the phenomena (not in a negative perspective) is raised, according to the teleological aspect of the Ancient Greek example on beautiful-virtuous. However, it should not escape our attention that the question on how young men appear is subject to a more general topic that is also topical: the question on what was the position

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10 Cf. *Charmides*, 153d2. On this transition as well as an analysis of Socrates' intentions, cf. Lawrence Lambert, *How Philosophy became Socratic: A study of Plato's Protagoras, Charmides, and Republic*, (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 153-157.

11 Cf. *Charmides*, 153d2-d5.

of philosophy at that time? Was it necessary and for what reasons? What is socially acceptable? Note also that the term "wise" is used for the young men, which cannot be completely justified, unless we examine in the light of a prospect under development or a desirable goal to be achieved. It is quite possible that young men are considered as the future bodies of the virtue of wisdom, which often – and not only in Plato's texts – corresponds to prudence. Socrates integrates his implicitly expressed broader pedagogical reflections in the spirit of his age, so, it could be said he follows systematic terms, both from the theoretical and sociological point of view, including the educational as well as a spiritual endeavor and institutional ascent. He basically brings to the light goals of the Athenian society, or at least of a part of it, whereas he does not exclude an indirectly expressed regularity in the choices-decisions to be made.

The narrative monologue of reflection, however, is completed – at least for the time being, as it will be proved- with the arrival of a group of young men, followed by a multitude of older, which are characterized as a crowd, a term that refers to indirect but clear dismissive statements[12]. The fact that there is no reference to names may not be accidental and could be associated with negative, regarding what should be done or is desirable to be done, categorizations about the common style and behavior of that time in Athens. On the one hand, there appears philosophy, which reveals great mental and broadly existential achievements and, on the other hand, there is a crowd that, exactly because of that, acts and evaluates the current circumstances or the general subjects in superficial criteria or based on the psychology of the mass or the social unconscious. According to the context, whoever is part of this mass is believed to be ruled by an explosive hedonism. In this contradictory as to the ages meeting, the young men appear in a way that, at least regarding the direction, helps to change the atmosphere, since these young men are also distinguished for their mood to tease. This mood is clearly justified by their age, but may also serve as a starting point to make clear the quality of their education – which is indirectly set as a task-orientated goal. This is where crucial questions about the relationship between two generations are raised. Specifically, is the somehow free spirit or careless liberation of their inner world supposed or not to feed with principles an opposite seriousness? What is the appropriate behavior: the philosophical or the mass? Is it the rational or the superficial? It is clearly a matter of interpretative-axiological criteria as well as social sensitiveness.

Nevertheless, the physical presence of these men frees Socrates' interlocutor from dealing completely theoretically with general points about which young man has become perfect according to the spiritual criteria presented before. In fact, these kind of criteria require extensive clarifications in each case. For instance: what elements does the term "philosophy" involve? Apart from the theoretical perspective, the topic requires an empirical approach as well, since the interlocutors will be able to ascertain what they will hear about the Athenian youth and actually by themselves through the assurances-validations that will

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12 Cf. *Charmides*, 153d5-154a2. It is to be mentioned that according to *Respublica* (for instance, 439b-441b) a crowd is probably a team of humans which follows insatiable desire or an explosive and not subject to reflective judgements flagrancy. Cf. for instance, 439b-441b.

result from a communication with them. That is to say, they will start from verifiable, provable and able to be classified by sensible – and cognitively 'manageable' – experience elements, which by definition contain the necessary information to prove or disprove what is said or, at least, supposed. So, the reason for the whole development of the discussion arises from a social spirit, which will protect the dialectic course that aims mostly at structuring the mental procedures. Cristian reason makes its purpose gradually obvious, at the same time excluding any univocal-axiomatic approaches. Any direct visual perspective and the theoretical elaboration of its data – together with the experiences that will arise from synthetic recollection – will result in concepts with valid application. Provided that syntheses will combine one another in an appropriate way, coming through the principles of relativity as a realistic criterion, also reflecting timeliness, which provides a clear measure for verification and denials, or generally for renewal of the already formed givens.

The episode that follows is broader than that of the first paragraph, if not in length at least in how deep thoughts are. Critias tells Socrates that he will inform him about the general personality of the beautiful young men and announces that the followers of a young man have just entered the palaestra, whose appearance is considered to be aesthetically great, a parameter obviously followed by a remarkable hedonism. This remarkable point, however, is considered here as such according to the typical meaning that the crowd has defined. Therefore, these are vulgar or, at least, thoughtless feeds, for the criteria of objectivity may not be recognized in people who react with mass-superficial way. It is to be mentioned that this sort of criteria are not included in Socrates' rational way of thinking, since they represent careless exposition of the appetitive part of soul and are the opposite of the rationality projected by the ancient Greek Enlightenment.

However, another point of anthropogeography needs explanation: the tension described is fed by the characterization of those entering not only as lovers but also as precursors, a predicate that makes the whole atmosphere in a narrative and representative way quite interesting, at least according to the social customs, regardless of their axiological-moral evaluations, which will be revealed latter. Or, else, it manifests the tendencies of the public opinion, expressing also the first critical approaches. So, these people add an enthusiastic tone to the whole direction, which normally is accompanied by appropriate linguistic and stylistic expressions. Furthermore, the verb "τυγχάνουσιν" and the following predicative participle "ὄντες" may reflect the pleasant surprise of the sophist for the unexpected coming of these young men, when the discussion was generally about the young Athenians and the general spiritual atmosphere in which they act and receive an education[13]. These are factors that, depending on their nature, are criteria of whether teenagers would be said to be wise. What is more, that young man for whom they speak about is also there, as the adverb "ἐγγύς" reveals[14]. The usage of the verb forms – "δοκεῖς", "τοῦ δοκοῦντος", "φαίνεσθαι"[15] – by Critias is not accidentally used by Plato, for he intends to show the ambiguous or multipart mean-

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[13] Cf. *Charmides*, 154a4.

[14] Cf. *Charmides*, 154a6.

[15] Cf. *Charmides*, 154a3-6.

ing of them, so as the reader to be prepared for the upcoming or even desirable reversal of the axiological positions of the sophist by the Athenian philosopher. They also put indirectly the objectivity of his words under the control of a mild skepticism, without excluding the possibility to be confirmed in a later phase of the discussion. However, it could be argued that Critias, due to reasons related to the narration or to dialectical nobility, just raises questions or uses modest expressions, whereas he is obligated to take into account his interlocutor's ignorance on the quality of the young Athenians, especially of those that have just entered. Any information, coming directly from the senses or related indirectly to the mind, is not enough for valid categorization or comparative evaluations.

Yet, the discourse between the sophist and Socrates implies that its foundations have been already established, despite the fact that the former does not attempt to force for evaluations by using final expressions. Actually, the following question arises: is it true that Socrates did not know what the spiritual atmosphere was at that time in Athens? Why does he appear with such a cognitive lack or having aporetic question on a subject that was his major concern? Despite this possible strategy, we believe that the scenario unfolds naturally and aims at bringing to light those criteria by which the sophist recognizes spirituality. Depending on his judgments, the evaluative principles that he follows will be explained. The sophist, however, keeps a moderate attitude. In fact, the adverb "αὐτίκα" which starts the last narration of the paragraph reveals his intention as an intellectual not to trap his interlocutor in unclear estimations[16]. Furthermore, the reader's anticipations extends to the next sentence, till the necessary explanations to be presented in relation to the transitions from the somehow general theoretical schema to its empirical, as far as possible, validations, so the reconstructions are unavoidably possible or expected, regardless of whether they will take place. In addition, it should not escape attention that subjectivity constantly changes. In fact, this adverb reveals the principle of the right moment to grasp, as an expression of a special personal participation, here an axiological one, not only with regard to the current situation but also to those circumstances that will feed the context of the debate to be followed. Any judgment based on the past constitutes a crucial point for the direction of the analyses and synthetic evaluations that will be put forward for discussion. And despite the fact that Theoretical and Practical Reason are not strictly established, they exist, at least indirectly, as a clear demand or syllogistic request. From an unclear but significant presence at the beginning they will be led to their advanced forms of awareness by the interlocutors, so some regulatory principles gradually arise.

On Socrates' question about who is this beautiful young man, Critias, before mentioning his name, answers that he knows him for he has already talked to him in the past. The fact that Socrates is familiar with Charmides serves the economy of the Platonic dialogue, since the Athenian philosopher has a view-expectation of what he is going to face dialectically or investigate or communicate, meaning actually a particular person, who is immediately announced by the sophist. The right moment extends its meaning, whereas the syllogistic and axiological interventions become more specific, for the past holds a

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16 Cf. *Charmides*, 154b6.

key role here as well. A new experience will arise here as well as the reaction to it, which will complete decisively recollection and will work as a source for conclusive axiological reconstructions.

The repetition of the verb "οἶδα" in the first and second person of singular[17] attracts the penetrating reader's attention and grows the differences from the verb "οἶμαι", which appears next[18]. The gnoseological structure follows some changes, which characterize the person who expresses them. In the first narrative schema, under the certainty that Socrates knows the young man, he uses the verb "οἶσθα" and the Athenian philosopher confirms by using the same verb when the person for whom they speak about becomes specific. This is, however, a succession that, generally, appears to be inconsistent, since, due to the strictly objective strategy followed in the epistemological issues, the thinking subject – or the interlocutors – goes (go) gradually from a simple opinion to the true knowledge. Nevertheless, this gnoseological clear as to the succession of the degrees of maturity of consciousness general critique faces the obstacle of the time successions, which have to do with the protagonists and set, at least for now, a limit to any discussion.

Specifically, Charmides is known from the past, which is an undeniable argumentative reality. Any cognitive expression, therefore, may not be independent from the objective context of the already formed circumstances to which it refers. In addition, a special kind of skepticism, based on some memory lacks or arrhythmias caused by time distance, come to the fore and make even more moderate the recognition. That is, since some time passed and Socrates has not a clear image of Charmides' personality, Plato uses in a second level the verb "οἶμαι", which balances or even weakens the verb "οἶσθα" used by Critias and the verb "οἶδα" used by the Athenian dialectician. Furthermore, these circumstances of limited recognition interfere with the duration of the tense used (present continuous), which added a permanent – rather than temporary – stable character to the verb. The "οἶμαι" has a critical role, for it suggests a new approach, which will lead in its overcoming, as a requirement for searching the stable. This present continuous could easily have the meaning of a present or past perfect form.

So, a past tense introduces ambiguous criteria, regarding the cognitive certainty of the person who experiences, which impose more moderate expressions about the possessed knowledge and the resulted objective factors of the evaluation. What is more, there is another natural parameter: The person itself, for which we speak about, has not remained in the same physical or spiritual condition. However, immediately after Charmides entered the place in which the interlocutors sit, judgments clearly change and the development is revealed by the cognitive verbal form "εἴσει", which is in middle voice[19]. As such, it necessarily leads us in that an internal conscious procedure on the part of the interlocutors will follow, which, due to the predicates "ἡλίκος" and "οἶος" attributed to Charmides and related mostly to qualities or quantitative extensions with qualitative results, in which eros is

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17 Cf. *Charmides*, 154a8 and b3.

18 Cf. *Charmides*, 154b4.

19 Cf. *Charmides,* 154b6.

also found, appears as unavoidable[20]. Therefore, it could be argued that in the second chapter, like in the first one, there is an emotional character, which ensures a clear rational direction, which has nothing to do with a superficial irresponsible or careless vagueness. Any comment or judgement expressed pre-shows the formation of clear categorical schemata.

2.2. Investigating the terms of the right interlocutor

Socrates' favorite question-answer method shows the importance of an interlocutor, who has to possess some mental and communicative properties or to be open to gain them in terms of knowledge. This regulatory principle makes the choice of those involved not to be random; instead it appertains to the terms of a particular thorough elaboration, which can easily develop due to the general spirit of Athens of that time, at which this Platonic dialogue is composed, a state with a strong demand for qualitative suggestions – that can also be applied. In this context of the special detection, Plato's teacher raises the question on the philosophical progress of the Athenians and especially young men, a performance that is closely related to the dialectical expectations, where the establishment of the requirement of the enlightening spirit is more than obvious. At this point, the prerequisites for anything to follow are composed, including those related with existential evaluations and those associated with the epistemological frame. Dialectical thinking is a tough process that takes time, and requires a minimum but quite dynamic mental substrate and a conscious and desired tolerance in critique on the part of the person being investigated. Otherwise, the whole discussion will be superficial. And this direction can only be ensured by philosophy, for not every man, for reasons that have to do either with his self-protection or psychological defense, can accept a critical reconstruction of his positions, regardless of whether they come from himself or his interlocutors, with the first aspect being more possible. He preserves the sense of a superficial self-examination over the critique of the rest and avoids, even in the sense of an illusion about his undeniable reliability, to be criticized by the others.

One of the thirty tyrants of Athens, Critias, suggests Charmides' relative to be Socrates' interlocutor, while it appears that the latter intends to put the Athenian young man under a mild and pedagogical examination. In fact, Critias insists on this: the philosopher should start from the representations that relate to his recollections, since the link to the past is quite necessary. At this point, historicity meets an aspect of dialectics, for it ensures, at least, the comparisons associated with the time scales and the conditions that each one of them has

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20 Cf. *Charmides*, 154b6. Yvon Brès, *La Psychologie de Platon* (Paris: P.U.F., 1973), 229, making an evaluation of this episode and a comparison of the conditions described here with other Platonic dialogues, says the following: «Mais dès que prennent la parole les personages en lesquels la tradition voit les porte-parole de Platon (Diotime et de Socrate dans le *Banquet*, Socrate dans le *Phèdre*, derrière la ficion de Stèsichore), il ne s'agit plus que l'amour masculin, exactement comme dans les dialogues où le problème de l'amour n'est évoqué que de manière occasionnelle». Presenting the erotic atmosphere between people of the same gender raises a braoder social matter, for which Socrates will, explicitly or implicitly, express his position. Brès refers to other dialogues as well, such as *Protagoras,* 309a-b, *Euthydemus,* 273a: «Καὶ εἰσέρχεται Κλεινίας, ὃν σὺ φῂς πολὺ ἐπιδεδωκέναι, ἀληθῆ λέγων· ὄπισθεν δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐρασταὶ πάνυ πολλοί τε καὶ ἄλλοι καὶ Κτήσιππος, νεανίσκος τις Παιανιεύς, μάλα καλός τε κἀγαθὸς τὴν φύσιν, ὅσον μὴ ὑβριστὴς διὰ τὸ νέος εἶναι», 276d and 282a-b, and *Gorgias*, 481d, so there is a textual validation as well.

formed. A fundamental element of historicity is the recollection that does not isolates some things but connects the time points, where there is initially an ambiguity that gradually disappears. The difference, however, between this first dialogue between Socrates and Critias and dialectics is quite obvious, at least with regard to the typical structure chosen. The dialogue is used by Critias in order to promote his relative over the rest young men. This makes the sophist to exaggerate in his description of the young Charmides, without objectively confirming by experience his words, by only relying on his expectations. The Athenian philosopher appears to be very careful in his expressions and "οἴεται" that Charmides, in relation to the impression that gave in his childhood, must have been a great young man taking into account those elements that already have been accepted as forming such an image.

The difference between dialogue and dialects is that the procedural steps followed by the latter rely on rational criteria – based on the validations of the sense data – and thus any false elements are excluded by definition or are not raised at all; the criterion for this cancelation is either some stable regulatory principles or the criteria set by the gradual arguments. So, this is not a process of logical exercises, apart when it is necessary, but follows the epistemological pair: proof-disproof, which necessarily requires development of the, as far as possible, probability into certainty. Only under these expectations can the direction towards objective and validated sentences be ensured, which compose a fundamental demand of consciousness and generally Theoretical Reason. Skepticism, as the source of reconstructions, holds a key role here. Nevertheless, the topics of the thought process that will follow regulatory directions have been defined by the question about the position of philosophy, which generally is not considered as just an insignificant occupation. In fact, its theoretical bases have major extensions and hold a key role in Practical Reason as well. Yet, the question is why young men are considered to be wise? Does Plato criticizes the general spiritual and political atmosphere of Athens, which some time ago had convicted Socrates? Does he look for those wise young men that will change its structure? The word has a special meaning and, therefore, its usage is not random. It is also possible that it is used for reasons of gentleness or teasing mood, which however is not superficial.

Table of contents in section 153d2-154b7

ἀνεψιός: relative (1)
ἐραστής: moral, erotic (1)
ἡλικία: anthropological, condition (1)
ἡλίκος: age (1)
θεῖος: relative (1)
κάλλιστος: emotional, comparative (1)
κάλλος: emotional (1)
καλός: emotional (1)
μειράκιον: anthropological, age (1)
νεανίσκος: anthropological, age (1)

νέος: anthropological, age (1)
οἷος: qualitative (1)
ὁρῶ: gnoseological, aesthetical (1)
ὄχλος: mass (1)
παῖς: anthropological, age (1)
σοφία: gnoseological (1)
υἱός: relative (1)
φαῦλος: moral, aesthetical (1)
φιλοσοφία: gnoseological (1)

Further discussion

Occasioned by the basic question on what is the relationship of the young men with philosophy raised by Socrates, we can speculate that Plato looks for a new order of things in Athens. In fact, he rejects completely the former one, which had led the state to social and

political decline and had condemned his teacher to death. The transition from the atmosphere of war – which actually was instigated by the democratic faction, which does not correspond to the democratic principles adopted by Plato – to the solution proposed by the Athenian philosopher for the successful outcome of the political issues is expressed through the combination of three fundamental concepts of his worldview: philosophy, body, soul, which all together will reveal in later phases of the dialogue divine eros.

This synthesis leads to a definition found in other dialogues as well – for instance *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*: philosophy is the way of thinking and acting and consists in decoding the relationship between beauty and wisdom. Taking into consideration that the topic under investigation here is how the virtue of "temperance" can be defined, and having in mind its erotic dimension as self-control, it is quite interesting to explain the transition from its common interpretation to a more complex essential one as a relationship of the body with the soul and as a prolific synthesis of this relationship with the question of knowledge on good and evil.

Therefore, we face a different transition: from the current opinion on the corporeal erotic beauty in the palaestra to the intellectual context on what the beauty of the soul defines. This transition forms new political and social terms and conditions. We could argue that the ideal resulted from the former description of philosophy in the introductory chapters of the *Charmides* actually shows Plato's ideal of rationality that is found in all of his work and clearly constitutes his main proposal on how necessary is to renew-reform the life style of individuals and collective schemata[21].

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21 On this subject-matter, one can read the specialized study of Schmid, W. Thomas, *Plato's Charmides and the Socratic Ideal of Rationality* (New York: Suny Press), 1998.

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L'image-représentation hypomnématique, tenant lieu du Platon non-écrit

Ad memoriam Alexis Philonenko (1932–2018)

Nous proposons ici un usage de l'image hypomnématique représentée dans la doctrine orale – les ἄγραφα δόγματα (*agrapha dogmata*), cet «enseignement non écrit de Platon» attesté par Aristote (*Physique* IV 2. 209b14). Il semble que Platon lui-même fasse allusion à cette doctrine réservée aux initiés de son Ancienne Académie, dans sa Lettre VII. Deux petites pages fort curieuses, 342c-344d, intégrées en manière de digression, examinées à la lumière du paradigme «graphiste», en liaison avec la critique platonicienne de la forme écrite apparentée à la peinture, révèlent le rôle important de l'image «représentative» (εἴδωλον) dans la définition platonicienne (*Lettre* VII, 342b).[1] Cette fonction mobile de la réminiscence (ὑπόμενα), le rôle hypomnématique de l'image-représentation platonicienne, avait déjà été soulignée dans la définition que «Socrate» de Platon offrait précisément par le biais de l'exemple ou «*à l'image de Dédale*» (*Euth.* 11d). En s'élevant vers un Principe, l'âme utilise «des images», les objets (*Rép.* 511a); ce sont ces derniers qui aident Platon à expliquer le genre intelligible des «Nombres-Idées». Il l'a fait lors de conférences orales présentées occasionnellement dans son école, devant les membres de son Académie, où Aristote témoigne que Platon a délivré une leçon sur les principes derniers et *Sur le Bien*[2]. Nous nous servons de

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1 Voir Platon, *Lettres*, traduction inédite et présentation par Luc Brisson, Paris, GF – Flammarion, 1987; 3e édition corrigée et mise, à jour, 1997. Notice introductive sur la *Lettre VII* discute de «la 'digression philosophique'» (p. 145-148) ainsi que du «problème de la 'doctrine non-écrite'» (p. 151-158). Cette dernière hypothèse, dit Luc Brisson, a été reprise par H. J. Krämer et K. Gaiser dans les années 1960 (voir notre *note 2 infra*). – «Mais comme les positions de H. J. Krämer et de K. Gaiser ont évolué depuis, en fonction des controverses qu'ont suscitées leurs travaux, il ne saurait être question ici d'en présenter une évaluation détaillée.» (*Id.* 151). Nous renvoyons à la bibliographie exhaustive de l'ensemble des travaux sur la *Lettre VII* qu'a dressée Luc Brisson (p. 164-166), ainsi qu'à ses Notes, spécialement p. 226-229.

2 Voir Léon Robin, *La théorie platonicienne des Idées et des Nombres d'après Aristote*, Paris, 1908 (réédition Hildesheim, 1963) et Platon, Paris, 1935 (réédition PUF, collection «Quadrige», 1997); voir aussi Julius Stenzel, *Zahl und Gestalt bei Platon und Aristoteles* (1924, 2e éd., 1933), et Harold Cherniss, *The Riddle of the Early Academy*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1945 (réimpression New York, 1962; traduction française aux éditions Vrin). Konrad Gaiser, en appendice de son ouvrage Platons ungeschriebene Lehre (Stuttgart, Ernst Kett, 1963), recueillit les textes antiques, «Testimonia platonica», se rapportant aux *agrapha dogmata* (p. 441-558). Marie-Dominique Richard (*L'enseignement oral de Platon*, Paris, Editions du Cerf, 1986) présente la traduction complète et variée de tous les «Témoignages» édités par Gaiser (p. 249-377).

la fonction psychagogique et hypomnématique du discours platonicien, formulée par Karl Friedrich Hermann en 1849, «Ueber Plato's schriftstellerische Motive»[3].

Selon August Boekch (1785–1867), philologue et antiquaire allemand, Platon y pose les doctrines sur ce qui serait le Bien en soi (l'Un-Bien), en laissant entendre qu'il aurait à dire davantage sur le sujet – dans les leçons orales?[4] Le livre VII de la *République* (534b), contient-il aussi des dialogues doctrinaux qui indiquent l'ascension vers le Bien, et les qualités opposées (*Rép.* 479a)? L'assimilation des doctrines pythagoriciennes se voit textuellement, entre autres, dans le livre VII de la *République* (531d). Sur la base de l'harmonie des nombres, Pythagore considérait que les sciences (μαθήματα) sont sœurellement proches, ἀδελφεά (DK 47 B 1). Platon utilise la même comparaison de leur sororité.[5] Mais, au lieu des *sciences*, il parle des connaissances (ἐπιστῆμαι); dans le dialogue, Socrate s'adresse à Glaucon:

> «…ces connaissances sont liées l'une à l'autre comme des sœurs, ainsi que les Pythagoriciens l'affirment, et nous également, Glaucon, qui sommes d'accord avec eux.» (*Rép.* 530d).

Et c'est en avertissant son interlocuteur que «ce n'est plus l'image de ce dont nous parlons qu['il verra], mais le vrai lui-même…» (*Rép.* 533a), que le «Socrate» de Platon formule l'attitude de rétention du savoir (pythagoricien et ésotérique; des doctrines non-écrites).[6]

Or, la vénération d'Aphrodisias «pour ce dont il est interdit de parler» (selon un fragment de Damascius), fait associer Boeckh à Philostrate (*Heroices* XIX 14): «les dieux chtoniens… dont il n'est pas permis de parler.» Cité dans *Philolaos des Pythagoreers Lehren*, dans l'édition de Boeckh (*Corpus*, 1828, p. LVI). Cet ouvrage est évoquée par Johann Jakob Bachofen (1816–1887), qui a suivi les cours de Boeckh à l'Université de Berlin (cf. Der Mutterrecht, 1861; trad fr. *Le droit maternel*, p. 1158). Et il nous semble qu'il n'a pas été ignoré non plus par le jeune Friedrich Nietzsche à Bâle.[7]

Le produit de cette fonction n'est autre que le langage imagé et fictif de l'*Onto-graphie* platonicienne… Nous examinerons également les *agrapha dogmata* sous l'aspect de cette «Onto-graphie», en nous demandant si Alexandre Koževnikov *dit* Kojève (1902–1968), avait complètement raison d'affirmer que «Platon s'est toujours refusé à toute On-

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3   K. F. Hermann, *Das Platonbild. Zehn Beitrâge zum Platonverständnis*, éd. par K. Gaiser, Hildesheim, 1969.

4   Boeckh, dans sa recension de la traduction des *Œuvres* de Platon par Schleiermacher: «*Platons Werke von Schleirmacher*», in *Heidelbergische Jahrbücher der Literatur für Philologie, Historie, Literatur und Kunst*, 1804.

5   Ces deux citations sont rapprochées par Bogoljub Šijaković dans son ouvrage *Mythos, Physis, Psyché – Essai sur «l'ontologie» et «la psychologie» présocratiques* (en serbe; Filosofska biblioteka «Aletheia», Belgrade – Nikšić, 1991; 2002, p. 188).

6   Platon, *La République*, traduction G. Leroux, GF – Flammarion (2002); 2004, p. 383. Sur l'interprétation ésotériste du passage 533a, voir les Notes, p. 688.

7   Voir l'édition posthume de ses cours, *Introduction à la lecture des dialogues de Platon*, p. 54 et 76. Le jeune Friedrich Nietzsche n'y voyait pas clairement encore, lui qui se réfère à Boeckh, ainsi qu'à Schleiermacher, dans ses cours sur les dialogues de Platon en 1871-1876 (*Introduction à la lecture des dialogues de Platon*, Combas, éditions l'éclat, 1991; trad. fr. de: Einleitung in das Studium der platonischen Dialoge; posthume). Au lieu de Nietzsche, c'est son traducteur qui se substitue aux détracteurs de la *doctrine non-écrite*: «En outre, en dépit de la *Lettre VII*, Platon a écrit, et pas seulement pour rire. » (Note du traducteur, *loc. cit*. XI). Platon a écrit – mais enfin cela ne concerne pas les éventuelles *agrapha dogmata*!

to-*graphie*…»?**8** N'a-t-elle quand même pas le moyen de décrire – et de garder en mémoire – cette réalité objective – incluant le Transcendant et incluant les mythes comme «histoires imagées» (*loc. cit.* 34)? Toute image est par définition de Kojève un «phénomène», c'est-à-dire une re-présentation «graphique» ou para-discursive, de ce qui est originairement présenté par la Perception au sens large (I, 32). Kojève parle des développements para-discursifs «graphiques» ou «imagés», qu'il appelle «mythes» (I, 31) ou histoires «imagées» (I, 34 et 37). Nous retenons pour la fin de notre étude l'affirmation que l'Idée peut être vue ici-bas uniquement comme beauté sensible (II, 182).

1. L'école de Tübingen
et le problème de la doctrine non-écrite de Platon

En partant de ce qui est connu de l'œuvre écrite de Platon, chaque nouveau lecteur contemporain de Platon se trouve-t-il encore dans la situation de Calliclès, auquel les «petits mystères» sont étrangers? Et s'il n'y est pas initié, «sans la connaissance du niveau inférieur (*Gorgias* 497c), l'initiation aux 'grands mystères' lui serait-elle défendue…», comme le présuppose Thomas A. Szlezák dans son étude *Platon lesen* (*Le plaisir de lire Platon*, p. 17)**9**, et dans son résumé de l'affaire, publié dans la revue *Philotheos*?**10**

La structure interne de l'être humain comprise de manière platonicienne – le corps comme le sépulcre de la vie de l'âme – représenterait dans ce cas-là l'obstacle insurmontable! Szlezák semble faire ici (p. 17 précitée, et p. 109-110) un mauvais usage «herméneutique» du mysticisme platonicien. Pour ne pas *finir* avec «l'impression que tout cela est du vent…»! (*id.* 20), le lecteur de Platon, plus averti que Calliclès, doit appréhender, et constater avec indulgence d'où souffle ce mysticisme platonicien, et non pas remédier à ses propres «réactions inadéquates», comme le présuppose Szlezák. Le 4e chapitre de sa lecture de Platon spécule sur «les possibilités de réactions inadéquates de la part du lecteur», comme si Szlezák s'arrogeait le rôle d'un sophiste.

C'est à partir de la critique de concentration de Schleiermacher sur les dialogues platoniciens**11**, où «l'exposition écrite est, au bout du compte, équivalente ou quasiment équivalente à l'activité philosophique orale», dit Szlezák (*id.*, p. II), que l'interprétation spécifique de l'Ecole de Tübingen a soulevé le «Problème de la Doctrine Non Ecrite de Platon» entre les années 1960 et 1990 – comme le dit le titre de l'étude de Gaiser publiée à

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8   Voir A. Kojève, *Essai d'une histoire raisonnée de la philosophie païenne*, t. II, Platon – Aristote (Gallimard, 1972), rééd. Tel / Gallimard 1977, p. 34.

9   Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1996; trad. fr. de: *Platon lesen* (Stuttgart, 1993).

10 Thomas Alexander Szlezák, «Methodische Bemerkungen zur Diskussion um die mündliche Philosophie Platons», *Philotheos* 5 (2005), p. 174-190. Szlezák y reprend les pans entiers de son ouvrage de 1993, en mesurant son évaluation à travers les trente ans passés (1993/2003). Or, c'est précisément le délai par lequel Platon mesure l'impact de sa doctrine – chez «des hommes déjà âgés et qui y ont prêté l'oreille depuis pas moins de trente ans, et qui, en ce moment même, se disent que ce que leur semblait on ne peut plus croyable, leur paraît maintenant le contraire. » (*Lettre II*, 314 b; trad. Luc Brisson, op. cit., p. 91).

11 Friedrich Daniel Schleiermacher, *Introduction aux dialogues de Platon* (1804-1848), traduction et introduction par Marie-Dominique Richard, Paris, Cerf, 2004, p. 65-67.

Darmstadt en 1972. Elle demande une concentration sur l'activité littéraire de Platon pour les initiés interprétée (ésotériquement) en égard à la critique de la forme écrite comme une fin en, soi, notamment dans le *Phèdre*, que se base sur une théorie orale des principes chez Platon. Cette théorie est exposée par les philologues et philosophes Hans Joachim Krämer (*Aretê bei Platon und Aristoteles*), Konrad Gaiser (l'ouvrage précité, *Platons ungeschriebe-ne Lehre* complété par les «Testimonia platonica»), enfin Thomas Alexander Szlezàk avec *Platon lesen*. Elle est reprise en Italie dans les études du philosophe Giovanni Reale (1931–2014) à propos de Platon «non écrit».[12]

Les autres exégètes – de Hermann et Boeckh à Robin, de Stenzel à Gadamer –, n'ignoraient pas à quel point Platon a été «très méfiant envers l'écriture», comme l'affirme Alexis Philonenko dans ses *Leçons platoniciennes* (1997, p. 47). «Elle permet de colporter les idées du philosophe et en autorise la déformation, puisque celui-ci n'est pas présent pour veiller à ce que les notions soient correctement saisies»…

En constatant que la doctrine de Platon n'apparaît qu'entre les lignes de ses dialogues, Alexandre Kojève dans son *Essai d'une histoire raisonnée de la philosophie païenne*[13], ajoutait que *Platon dissimule sa doctrine à dessein* – «parce que sa dé-couverte par le lecteur (ou l'auditeur) est censée être une pierre de touche des aptitudes philosophiques de celui-ci». Vingt ans plus tard, Szlezàk en un plein chapitre ne fait que redire et développer cette hypothèse.

En accord virtuel avec l'opinion de Kojève de 1972, Hans Georg Gadamer a remarqué en 1968 ce que les philologues de l'Ecole de Tübingen ont souligné avec vigueur: les dialogues de Platon *usent consciemment de la réserve*. Mais Gadamer a considéré cette réserve comme question même de la méthode herméneutique: «la question est seulement de savoir ce que signifie cette réserve consciente».

Car, les problèmes herméneutiques de la marche et de la transmission de la philosophie de Platon, et de l'essai de reconstruction de son enseignement que l'on peut rattacher à cette transmission indirecte, ne pouvaient pas n'être entendus par Gadamer. Provoqué par les études de Gaiser et Krämer, il a répondu en 1968 par son essai: «La dialectique non écrite de Platon» (in *Idee und Zahl*, *Studien zum platonischen Philosophie*, l'ouvrage collectif sur la Philosophie de Platon[14]). L'objection principale de Gadamer est que la maigreur squelettique de la traduction indirecte de l'enseignement de Platon – maigreur telle que *les os s'entrechoquent*, écrit-il –, n'a pas plus de résultat, au contraire, que l'analyse formelle des dialogues platoniciens connus, qui accorde clairement une préférence à la tradition directe. Car, il existe une énorme différence de genre entre les contenus de l'entretien platonicien, la forme didactique, et la forme littéraire des dialogues écrits (*id.* 255). En commentaire d'un

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12 Voir l'édition italienne: Hans Joachim Krämer, *Platone e i fondamenti della metafisica. Saggio sulla teoria dei principi e sulle dottrine non scritte di Platone con una raccolta dei documenti fondamentali in edizione bilingue e bibliografia*, introduction et traduction de Giovanni Reale, Milan, 1982; 3ème éd. en 1986, 4e en 1989, etc.
13 Paris, Gallimard, 1972; réédition Gallimard/Tel, 1997 (t. I-III); t. III, p. 160.
14 Essai repris dans le livre de Gadamer, *L'Art de comprendre. Ecrits* I, Herméneutique et tradition philosophique, Paris, Aubier-Montaigne, 1982, p. 253.

ouvrage tel que celui de Konrad Gaiser, «Protreptique et paranomase dans les dialogues de Platon»[15], qui insiste sur l'exorde à la philosophie dans les cours dispensés par Platon dans son Académie, Gadamer admet que «les auteurs de Tübingen ont exposé d'une façon très approfondie et convaincante ce qui depuis longtemps était une certitude évidente [*pour Gadamer lui-même*], à savoir que, d'après le genre littéraire, les dialogues platoniciens se rangeaient dans le *genos protreptikon*».[16]

Mais Gadamer souligne en même temps que la prise en considération de la forme dialogique s'oppose à la fixation du platonisme dans un système doctrinal (*id*. 254). Il veut rappeler que dans son ancien livre, *La Dialectique éthique de Platon*[17] – réédité en 1968 précisément –, il avait entrepris avec des moyens phénoménologiques (à l'Université de Marbourg) la déduction de la dialectique platonicienne à partir du dialogue socratique. Gadamer a donc repoussé à l'arrière-plan l'idée directrice de l'existence d'une «doctrine» platonicienne contre le schéma évolutif qu'il voit aussi dans la thèse de la structure numérique du Logos (p. 257). En 1968, il reconnait qu'en 1931, il avait repoussé cette dernière thèse avec peut-être «exagération».[18] Mais ce rappel lui sert à exclure de la discussion les concepts controversés de la «doctrine ésotérique» et surtout de la «doctrine secrète» réintroduits notamment par Gaiser et Krämer à Tübingen. Ainsi, Gadamer souligne que l'enseignement oral était soumis à la loi du discours spécifique de *cours* ciblés sur la vie telle qu'elle se présentait à l'Académie platonicienne, et les cours étaient d'une continuité plus ample que le dialogue écrit qui atteint de plus une sphère plus large (*id*. 255). La priorité dans la transmission va, encore une fois, au dialogue écrit. Gadamer ne pense pas qu'on a le droit d'accorder aux cours de Platon une importance illimitée (*id*. 256).

Et, comme Aristote le conseillait dans l'*Ethique à Nicomaque* (A 2. 1095b3), il nous fallait commencer par ce qui nous est connu; *isôs oûn hêmin ge arcteon opo tôn hêmin grôrimôn*.

2. Eros actif contre la théorie sur la rétention du savoir

Les différents moments des dialogues platoniciens dans lesquels il y a une suspension intentionnelle de la parole, où la pensée reste l'énigme qui n'a pas été livrée à fond, sont qualifiés par Szlezák de «passages de rétention». Szlezák cite par exemple *Charmide* 161d. Il note également[19] que Hans Joachim Krämer dans *La vertu chez Platon et Aristote* (Heidelberg, 1959, p. 389 sq.) a été le premier à avoir clairement compris la portée de ces passages... Le dialogue de la *République* (dont on peut trouver une parenté thématique avec *le*

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15 *Protreptik und Paränese in den Dialogen Platos* (1955). Paranomase est une figure de rhétorique où les mots presque homonymes (*paranymes*) sont rapprochés dans une phrase. Par exemple, «compter le nombre» (*ergasaméne érgon*) ou érga zoménoi dans le *Banquet*, 179c et 182e.

16 *L'Art de comprendre*, op. cit., p. 257.

17 *Platos dialektische Ethik. Phänomenologische Interpretation zum Philebos* (Leipzig, 1931). L'ouvrage est d'ailleurs cité dans la bibliographie de Szlezák.

18 Gadamer ne semble pas s'être complètement libéré lui-même de la thèse évolutive car, en soutenant que «très tôt dans les dialogues platoniciens, se rencontrent des allusions – pour le dire d'un mot – à la structure numérique du Logos» (*L'art de comprendre*, op. cit., p. 257), il souscrit en effet à la thèse évolutive qu'il veut repousser.

19 *Le plaisir de lire Platon*, op. cit., p. 31.

Politique), décide sur *l'unité*, laissée indécise dans le *Sophiste*. Glaucon polit les portraits de l'homme juste et de l'homme injuste – Socrate dirait, qu'il polit *une statue* ! Notons que la sculpture et la peinture sont absentes de la critique des arts à laquelle Platon se livre dans la *Rép.* 401d. Mais c'est toujours le dialogue de *Phèdre* qui est jugé comme la critique capitale de l'écrit – la *graphê* – et qui constitue le fil conducteur dans la description des dialogues platoniciens.[20]

Or, selon nous, on peut expliquer la critique dépréciative de l'écrit dans le *Phèdre* de Platon, tout d'abord par une certaine crainte face à une innovation, mais aussi par peur que l'écrit ne provoque la perte du contact quasi physique avec l'interlocuteur. La séduction érotique et plus précisément homo-érotique dans le discours platonicien passe par l'affliction orale.

> « L'apprentissage par l'écrit se fait en temps simulé (court), comme la croissance des plantes dans les jardins artificiels dits d'Adonis, tandis que l'insémination par la parole vive exige le temps long et lent du dialogue, peut-être interminable » (*Phèdre*, 276b-277a).

Ce fragment énigmatique sur les jattes ou corbeilles verdoyantes de plantes fanées, a fait couler beaucoup de bile sinon d'encre noire... Ainsi, dans une notice sur Platon dans *Le Différend*[21], Jean-François Lyotard n'a pas semblé conscient du sens rituel avec lequel les femmes jetaient à la mer les « jardins d'Adonis »... Par contre, Thomas A. Szlezák décrit minutieusement ce rituel pour faire « comprendre la comparaison entre les procédés d'un cultivateur intelligent et ceux du philosophe ou du 'dialecticien' », dont le passage de *Phèdre* représente la référence la plus ancienne...[22] Mais Szlezák ne tire aucune conclusion quant au symbolisme sexuel de l'écriture – semence fanée et sans procréation dans ces « jardins d'Adonis » et de la parole-semence du « dialecticien » oral platonicien.

Dans le premier cas, la transmission écrite sans immédiateté de la communication philosophique orale – la thèse du *logos* oral improvisé ou composé, monologique ou dialogique –, devient la « copie » écrite, le simulacre, *eidolon*. L'idée de la « semence » du dialecticien (*logoi echontes sperma*; dans *Phèdre* 277a1) est acceptée sans l'examen d'un symbolisme homoérotique par lequel le dialecticien se met en quête « d'une âme faite pour cela » (*ibid.*, 276e6), c'est à dire disposée à la transmission de *sa semence philosophique*, comme le dit Szlezák[23].

Par ailleurs, le dialogue *Phèdre* dans le catalogue de Thrasylle était classé sous le genre « éthique » et avec un sous-titre conséquent: *Sur l'amour* (*Peri érotos*). Le problème central de *Phèdre*, comme le voit aussi Szlezák (*id.* 64), n'est pas une discussion sur l'écrit, mais de

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20 Voir *Le plaisir de lire Platon*, p. 40 et 49.

21 Les éditions du Minuit, 1983, p. 44.

22 *Le plaisir de lire Platon*, p. 6. – L'état passif du symbole rappelle la légende romaine selon laquelle une statue du jonc remplacera l'usage dont Hercule a délivré Latium: jeter un homme vivant dans le Tibre comme sacrifice aux dieux. Giambattista Vico l'évoque dans *la Science nouvelle* (II, « Autres corollaires », p. 205 de l'édition Tel/Gallimard). Par rapport à l'antiquité grecque, Vico se trompe en affirmant l'existence de la sculpture à l'époque d'Homère (d'après le bouclier d'Achille). Mais en niant l'existence de la peinture, il paraît considérer comme si la fonderie et la gravure pouvaient précéder le noyau de l'expression la plus élémentaire qu'était le dessin. Voir *la Science nouvelle*, Livre III, « De l'époque à laquelle Homère a vécu ».

23 *Le plaisir de lire Platon*, p. 70.

déterminer quel est le meilleur amant pour un jeune homme. On peut comprendre que Platon veut se garder un droit-autoritaire d'influencer l'interlocuteur – et non le lecteur –, en contact direct avec ce qui lui échappe physiquement avec l'écrit.

En effet, les reproches que Platon fait sur l'absence du locuteur d'une parole désormais consignée à la lecture seule, peuvent être retournés par l'argument du rôle salvateur de l'écriture dans la conservation de la parole d'un locuteur en son impossibilité de nous tenir la chandelle. Pour ne donner qu'un exemple inverse de la théorie du «non écrit», je soulignerai que les dits du Théétète défunt, ont été sauvés de la mort grâce aux notes qu'Euclide prenait de son dialogue avec Socrate... Après la mort de Théétète, Euclide ne pouvait rapporter ce dialogue de mémoire sinon par l'écrit...

Platon l'affirme par les paroles suivantes (dans *Théétète* 143a):

> «Mais, aussitôt rentré chez moi, je mis par écrit mes souvenirs et je rédigeais ensuite à loisir ce qui me revenait en mémoire et (...) je rectifiais mes notes, en sorte que j'ai cette conversation écrite à peu près en entier.»

C'est ainsi, veut dire Platon, que nous est resté le dialogue *Théétète*. L'élaboration écrite des souvenirs peut avoir son extension dans un temps plus long – et non pas seulement court, comme dit le *Phèdre*. L'écriture offre la possibilité, comme dans le labourage de la terre, de revenir lentement sur ses pas, de rectifier sa mémoire, d'épuiser jusqu'au fond l'expression interminable. Ces arguments au bénéfice de l'écriture, loin du symbole péjoratif des *jardins artificiels*, semblent d'emblée pouvoir contre argumenter l'idée de s'en tenir trop brièvement aux valeurs de la seule parole orale. La doctrine de la tripartition de l'âme paraît à Fustigère comme «l'aboutissement normal d'une lente évolution.» – «Un fruit mûrit lentement, mais il tombe de l'arbre en un instant», écrit Fustigère à propos de la tripartition.[24]

La science des philosophes du passé (ceux morts, comme Théétète à l'époque du dialogue de Platon), ou de penseurs étrangers, qui ne peuvent pas toujours être physiquement présents, est aussi contenue et accessible grâce aux livres écrits et lus dans un espace sans fin. A propos de Protagoras, celui «qui était la sagesse même», Socrate demande à Théétète: «Tu as lu cela, je suppose?» Et Théétète lui répond: «Oui, et plus d'une fois» (152a). Socrate donne une pareille réponse à Euripide à propos de sa lecture de l'ouvrage (perdu) d'Héraclite dit l'Obscur. C'est à la παλιγγενεσία d'Héraclite que Platon emprunte les éléments de la preuve de l'immortalité de l'âme dans *Phédon* 70c (DK Fr. 88).

Pour toutes ces raisons, exceptée celle de se méprendre dans l'estimation d'un lien positif entre l'écriture et le temps, la critique de l'écrit par Platon laisse poindre surtout son regret de la perte d'une certaine forme d'*eros* que dispense la parole orale, et cela physiquement, d'homme à homme. Dans cette perspective, le livre écrit pâtit d'une absence de présence corporelle de *l'orateur* qui – au moyen d'un symbolisme phallique rudimentaire – peut *laisser un aiguillon* dans l'oreille de son interlocuteur. L'idée de la piqûre dans les *Assemblées* du comédiographe Eupolide (celui qui attribue l'image d'aiguillon à Périclès), accentue ce symbole phallique du mot qui pénètre en chair et en os. Platon dans les polémiques appelle Socrate «un bourdon».

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24 Perceval Fustigère, *Les mythes de Platon*, Paris, Alcan, 1930, p. 76 et 86.

Or, la transmission philosophique du porteur de la discussion, si elle est comparée naïvement, comme par les philosophes de l'école de Tübingen uniquement au remède (le *pharmakon*, dans le *Charmyde*) et non à l'«aiguillon» socratique, exige que le bon récipient de la préparation adéquate, soit bien à la hauteur pour qu'en soit tiré tout le profit escompté. Au contraire des exposants de l'école de Tübingen, Luc Brisson est cité dès la préface de Szlezák comme l'adversaire de la théorie de Platon «non écrit»[25]. Luc Brisson, donc, dans sa présentation du *Banquet* de Platon, donné en l'honneur d'Agathon, cite ce dernier comme «assez représentatif des convictions de son époque, (*car Agathon*) considère l'éducation comme la transmission du savoir ou de la vertu qui passe d'un récipient plein, le maître, vers un récipient vide ou moins rempli, le disciple, par l'intermédiaire d'un contact physique, simple toucher ou pénétration phallique et éjaculation dans l'union sexuelle». Luc Brisson appuie ce début de l'Introduction à sa propre traduction de *Banquet* (éd. Flammarion, p. 11) sur le fragment où Socrate répond à Agathon:

> «Ce serait une aubaine, Agathon, si le savoir était de nature à couler du plus plein vers le plus vide pour peu que nous touchions les uns les autres, comme c'est le cas de l'eau qui, par l'intermédiaire d'un brin de laine, coule de la coupe la plus pleine vers la plus vide» (*Symp.* 175d).

Et Paul Natorp a pu écrire sur l'union du sujet (le «psyché» dans *Théét.* 184d, 185d, 187a) et de l'objet, «afin d'engendrer la connaissance par une sorte de copulation.»[26] Ailleurs, la contemplation du Beau est décrite comme un «acte de copulation» (Zeugungsakt)[27]. *Voir* est purement actif et correspond à une *copulation-production* (*id.* 472).

3. Les SYZIGIA

Thomas A. Szlezák, au plus vif du sujet de sa lecture platonicienne (chapitre 5), fait une description précise et une interprétation détaillée inédites du thème récurrent du cryptage et de la rétention intentionnelle du savoir... C'est la «réserve» dont parlait déjà Kojève, comme nous l'avons découvert.

Comme Schleiermacher, dans le *corpus d'harmonie* des textes platoniciens classés, s'est servi d'un registre des *syzigia*[28], un procédé herméneutique abrégé sert à Szlezák pour appuyer son argument. Il se réfère surtout aux fragments suivants des dialogues, que nous relisons dans l'optique qu'il a proposée:

– *Cratyle* 383b-384a, où Hermogène se refuse de s'expliquer à Socrate (mais cela constitue-t-il un ésotérisme au sens défendu par Szlezák?); 427d-e, où Hermogène se plaint que Cratyle parle souvent codé, et il ne sait pas si c'est exprès (mais est-ce encore un ésotérisme?);

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[25] «Les moyens par lesquels on essaie de maintenir le consensus antiésotérique montrent à quel point il se porte mal. Des adversaires polémistes vont jusqu'à redéfinir arbitrairement (sic) les 'présupposés et les conséquences d'une interprétation ésotériste de Platon'» (tel est le titre d'un article de L. Brisson, édité plusieurs fois)..., écrit Szlezák dans la préface (p. III) à la traduction française de sa lecture de Platon datée à Tübingen le 5 août 1996.
[26] P. Natorp, *Platos Logik*, 1911, p. 112; trad. fr. p. 171.
[27] Natorp, *Platon*, 1903, p. 108.
[28] Schleiermacher, *Introduction aux dialogues de Platon*, op. cit., p. 77. Nous avons évoqué ce procédé des «passages décisifs» (*syzigia*) dans notre étude: «Quelle trace de la théologie platonicienne dans la Comète Bayle», *Philotheos* 11 (2011), p. 37-38.

– *Euthydème* (293b-e, 294a-296d): les sophismes sur le savoir et le «ressouvenir». (Mais nous retenons le combat de Socrate contre les croyances superstitieuses en dieux anthropomorphes, «telles que les racontent les poètes et desquelles ont été, par la main des bons peintres et pour les gens comme nous, décorés les sanctuaires…»);

– *Protagoras* (341d): repousse la question sur la capacité du sophiste «de porter secours à son *logos*» (p. 94);

– *Charmyde* (174b);

– *Gorgias* 499c: Socrate se plaint que Calliclès fait exprès de l'égarer, tel un enfant, dans le débat (mais notre question à propos de la méthode herméneutique prise pour de l'ésotérisme supposé, reste le même[29]);

– *Hippias mineur* (370e, 373b);

– *Hippias majeur* (300c-d);

– enfin *Ion* (541e).

Tous ces dialogues cités dans l'argumentation de Szlezák appartiennent pourtant à la jeunesse de Platon et à sa première période de création jusqu'à 385 avant notre-ère, et donc bien avant la fondation de l'Académie par Platon en 387, à l'âge de cinquante un an. Or, le dialogue de *Phèdre*, central dans la discussion sur l'écriture, peut être daté, selon Luc Brisson, comme postérieur aux dialogues du *Banquet* et de *la République*, et antérieur au *Sophiste*, au *Politique*, au *Philèbe* et surtout au *Timée*[30]. Est-ce que l'exposé au niveau *mythique* d'images, précède logiquement toujours l'exposé dialectique? Et à quel point les simples images sont qualifiées de mythe?

Le choix des dialogues tels *Cratyle*, *Euthydème*, ou *Gorgias* parait cohérent, puisqu'avec un dénominateur commun qui est la philosophie du langage, liée à un thème rhétorique d'actualité à l'époque de jeune Platon. Et, comme nous le remarquons dans les commentaires stylistiques concernant les fragments précis indiqués par Szlezák qui contiendraient ses arguments, il nous semble plutôt que Platon laisse des points de suspension à titre d'enjeu rhétorique. Cet enjeu est caractéristique pour la dispute entre les différents penseurs mis en scène (d'après une «méthode herméneutique», comme le dit Gadamer), et non par la recherche d'un quelconque «ésotérisme» de non-dit secret.

Pour sa part, Lambros Couloubaritsis a soulevé une autre difficulté à laquelle il n'a pas trouvé de réponse chez les interprètes de l'Ecole de Tübingen:

«si les entretiens ésotériques de Platon traitent des questions métaphysiques fondamentales, comme celle de l'Un, comment peut-on expliquer la présence d'un dialogue comme Parménide, où l'Un est envisagé selon toutes les possibilités ? Compte tenu de son caractère insolite, le contenu de ce texte ne devrait-il pas être secret?…»[31]

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29 Jacques Cazeaux dans sa traduction de *Gorgias* (parue dans «Le Livre de poche» en 1996; p. 127), ajoute ici le commentaire suivant: «Socrate avait fait part de cette confiance, juste après la grande tirade de Calliclès (en 487e). Quant à l'enfant, Polos avait prétendu qu'un enfant pouvait aisément réfuter les propositions morales de Socrate (470c)…»

30 Luc Brisson, Introduction dans: Platon, *Phèdre*, GF – Flammarion, p. 33.

31 L. Couloubaritsis, «Le Platonisme» in: *Aux origines de la philosophie européenne*, p. 191. Ed. De Boeck, Bruxelles, 1994 (2ème édition). Selon Luc Brisson, Parménide est «sans doute écrit un peu d'années après 370

Néanmoins, aux yeux de Szlezák «il semble incroyable à la longue que l'on n'ait point remarqué que, dans l'un des dialogues les plus réussis sur le plan formel, l'*Euthydème*, la rétention du savoir constitue le thème structurant et, en grande partie, porteur de sens: ainsi, si l'on ne comprend pas ce thème, on ne peut accéder qu'à une compréhension partielle du dialogue».[32]

Pourtant, la promesse est aussitôt dispersée par le constat de l'*ironie* socratique quant aux thèses détenues par les sophistes Euthydème et Dionysodore qu'ils s'abstiennent de révéler (*Euthydème*, 304b). Cependant, Szlezák s'efforce de prouver son argument en creusant (d'après ce dernier pseudo-exemple), la possibilité «que Platon conçoit la rétention consciente du savoir philosophique d'une part comme un choix individuel possible et» – Szlezák glisse ici vers son deuxième exemple (tiré de *Protagoras*, 342a-e) – «d'autre part, comme une mesure étatique en vue de l'organisation de l'éducation» (*id*. 25). Mais le deuxième exemple cité d'exhortation à la philosophie, abruptement introduit, ne montre que l'ironie avec laquelle cette fois Platon lui-même donne «une image fictive de la Sparte 'réelle'»... Les Spartiates posséderaient une activité philosophique cachée sans témoin (*id*. 25). «Cette plaisante fiction», concernant les sources du pouvoir étatique «*caché*» de la Sparte, n'est pourtant pas encore le vrai problème du Platon non-écrit. Encore moins le secret d'état (dans *La République*, 503d, 540a, et dans *Lois*, 951d-952b) qui a en commun le savoir «*secret*» du discours platonicien (*id*. 26). En déclarant qu'il possède ici «une idée clef», il me semble que Szlezák ne sort pas indemne du chapitre 5° et d'un rôle de sophiste.

En revanche, Philonenko déduit du *Phèdre* 275c sq., que la méthode d'enseignement préférée de Platon dans l'Académie à Athènes fut la communication directe, vivante, avec ses élèves. La critique de la manière dont on se sert des livres «tandis qu'à l'intelligence on substitue la mémoire animale»[33], est mise en rapport avec la méfiance platonicienne envers l'écriture (*id*. 47). L'écriture «permet de colporter les idées du philosophe et en autorise la déformation, puisque celui-ci n'est pas présent pour veiller à ce que les notions soient correctement saisies». Enfin, la fondation de la philosophie politique platonicienne, «comme une métaphysique fondée sur une politique» (*id*. 412), découlerait aussi des expériences réelles de Platon – détails biographiques de ses voyages politiques à Syracuse; rencontre avec le pythagoricien Archytas.

Partant de la mémoire humaine et du rôle de la réminiscence, que Platon a définies dans la *Lettre VII* liée à son séjour en Sicile, nous avons annoncé notre idée selon laquelle il privilégie l'image comme repère conceptuel des points de sa doctrine.

4. Scriptura continua

Du point de vue de l'histoire de l'écriture, la pratique de la *scriptura continua* en majuscules à l'époque antique grecque, où l'on compte encore avec des osselets, pouvait «trahir» la

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avant notre ère» (Platon, *Parménide*, GF – Flammarion, Introduction, p. 14). Pour sa part, Jean-Paul Sartre, dans ses *Cahiers pour une morale* (posthume 1983; p. 420), rapproche Un-Chose-Autre au simulacre de l'Un de la huitième thèse du Parménide.

32 *Le plaisir de lire Platon*, p. 24.

33 *Les leçons platoniciennes*, op.cit., p. 25.

pensée et c'était la raison empirique pour laquelle Aristote pensait encore qu'il était de son devoir d'opposer la clarté de la langue prononcée à l'ambiguïté de la langue écrite.

Les rapports entre l'écrit et l'oral ont certainement évolué et les différences avec l'ancienne dépréciation platonicienne et aristotélicienne de l'écrit se font perceptibles au Moyen-Age. Il n'est pas obligatoire que le suivi de ces rapports n'ait été commenté seulement que dans des textes qui, comme ceux de Proclus, ont été déterminants pour approcher Platon depuis le XIIème siècle. Car, dans le traité sur l'Intuition logique (commentaire sur les *Réfutations sophistiques* d'Aristote), Galien dès le IIème siècle, reconnaît le rôle positif de l'écriture qui ajoute désormais aux lettres signes d'accentuation et signes de ponctuation.[34]

Le renversement complet à l'avantage de l'écriture, sera opéré beaucoup plus tard au cours du XVIIIème siècle. Dans la prose publiée par Robert Challe en 1713, les *Illustres françaises*, on remarque que le personnage d'un amant à propos de la lettre d'une jeune femme décrit le nouveau degré de l'esthétique d'écriture comme supérieure à l'oralité.

> « C'est un style concis, châtié, naturel et pathétique, revêtu d'un certain caractère touchant, qui pénètre mille fois plus que la parole animée du son de la voix et des gestes du corps. »[35]

Ceci dit, le dogme platonicien du discours dialogique appartient encore au langage apparenté au théâtre. Si ce n'était que le fragment cité de Robert Challe, il pouvait donc à lui seul donner raison à cette affirmation de Michel Foucault dans *Les Mots et les Choses*, que le lieu de l'écriture se situe au XVIIIème siècle. Dans une note de la réédition du roman de Robert Challe en 1994, Jacques Cormier et Frédéric Deloffre signalent une différence entre un praticien du théâtre, tel Marivaux, qui « souligne la supériorité de l'oral » et Challe qui, comme ici dans les *Illustres françaises*, « met en puissance la valeur de suggestion de l'écrit, privé 'du son de la voix et des gestes du corps' ». Voilà ces *voix et gestes*, que Jacques Derrida ira chercher chez Husserl (*La Voix et le Phénomène*). Les philologues et philosophes de l'école de Tübingen sont allés les chercher dans le « non écrit » inconnu, au lieu d'entrevoir de quel secret et de quelle initiation à la parole-aiguillon Platon parlait et s'il y avait une place quelconque pour une interprétation ésotérique.

Ce qui signifie que l'histoire de l'examen herméneutique de la critique dans *Phèdre* pourrait avoir commencé bien avant la tradition de la philologie allemande fondée véritablement par Friedrich Schleiermacher avec son édition des dialogues de Platon au XIXème siècle... Le présupposé de Schleiermacher était juste par rapport à la critique de l'écrit platonicien car il ne prenait pas pour point de départ l'idée du monde intelligible hérité du néoplatonisme[36]. Grâce à la célèbre Introduction à sa propre traduction de Platon, publiée à Berlin (en 1804)[37], Schleiermacher est cependant considéré par Gaiser, Krämer, Szlezák, Reale et *alii*, comme celui qui a en même temps frayé la voie à cette perspective qui don-

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34 Cf. Pierre Pellegrin, Introduction in Galien, *Traités philologiques & logiques*, GF Flammarion, 1998, p. 60-61.
35 Amsterdam, 1713; rééd. Bibliothèque classique, Livre de poche (1996), p. 94.
36 Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, « Schleiermacher platonicien », *Archives de philosophie*, t. XXXII, cahier I, p. 28-39. Paris, janvier-mars 1969.
37 Platons Werke, vol. I, pp. 5-36.

nait à *Phèdre* une importance encore jamais prise en compte... Szlezák note (*id.* 40) qu'il a essayé de combler cette lacune due à Schleiermacher dans son étude interprétative *Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der Philosophie* (Berlin – New York, 1985), et dont l'ouvrage *Platon lesen* représente la prolongation directe.

4. 1. Le cadre iconoclaste

Dans environ trente-cinq textes authentiques de Platon, nous découvrons le *paradeigme* pictural et sculptural, à plus des deux tiers les références aux beaux-arts, soit vingt-cinq *Dialogues* concernés, et cela sans compter les *Lettres* VII et XIII. Les images sont des ombres d'où vient émerger une vérité. Ce qui est exprimé par le «Socrate» de Platon au début du livre VII de la *République*, en imaginant qu'au-dessus des murets de la caverne où le genre humain est prisonnier, s'agitent «des statues d'hommes (les *andries*) et d'animaux, façonnés en pierre, en bois et en toute espèce de matériau» (*Rép.* 514c-515a). Même si l'on est habitué au fait que Socrate fabrique ses exemples rhétoriques «comme un sculpteur [fabrique] des statues» (*Rép.* 540c), son interlocuteur Glaucon – «fils d'Ariston» et donc le frère de Platon –, remarque que c'est «une image étrange» qu'il vient de décrire là (*Rép.* 515a). En effet, l'image comme matrice précède la réflexion. Elle apparaît «accidentelle» dans les propos de Socrate, lui-même fils d'un sculpteur (l'artiste Sophronisque). Dans la lignée artisanale, la réponse comique de Socrate en dialogue avec le noble Alcibiade, provient du fait que les sculpteurs comme le père de Socrate tenaient Dédale pour leur maître et ancêtre commun (*Alc.* 121a)[38]. Or, le métier se transmettant de père en fils, Socrate a dû baigner dans la sculpture... Tout jaillit du père créateur platonicien, l'*Agathon*.[39] Si Socrate, qui a été *voilé par la laideur*[40], se réclame de la tradition de l'architecte mythique Dédale, par la suite – dans le dialogue de *Banquet* – on s'attend aux repartis de ses interlocuteurs, tel Alcibiade le comparant simultanément et «à ces silènes dans les ateliers de sculpteurs» et au satyre musicien Marsyas (*Symp.* 215)[41], et par conséquent dans l'œuvre entière de Platon, disciple socratique. L'inventaire complet de ces références à la sculpture, ainsi qu'à la peinture, montrerait une vérité restée dans l'ombre: Platon passe par l'image pour formuler sa théorie des Idées et pour représenter leur participation avec le monde sensible.

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38 Voir note 79 de Pradeau in *Alcibiade*, GF – Flammarion, p. 204.

39 Paul Natorp, *Les Idées de Platon*, 1903, p. 184.

40 Alexis Philonenko, *Leçons platoniciennes*, p. 31.

41 Karl Reinhardt remarque (*Les mythes de Platon*, 1927; trad. fr. Galimard, 2007, p. 43) la position inconfortable de Socrate: «comme plébéien, sous les aristocrates; affublé d'un visage de Silène et en outre d'un sérieux et de manières impossibles... » Et d'après l'analyse du Dr Lacan (*Séminaire* VIII, séance du 8-II-1961), Alcibiade pousse sa comparaison très loin: il « compare ici Socrate à un satyre pas simplement de la forme d'une boîte, d'un objet plus ou moins dérisoire, mais au satyre Marsyas nommément, en tant que quand il entre en action chacun sait par la légende que le charme de son chant se dégage.» En général, les modèles sont importants parce que les gens ont besoin d'images, porteurs des symboles, « c'est notre faiblesse animale », diagnostique Lacan (*Sém.* II, «Le Moi», 19-I-1955). On trouve le personnage de Marsyas engagé dans un solo de flûte, en présence d'Apollon assis tenant une grande cithare posée sur ses genoux, dans un relief décorant le socle d'un groupe statuaire de Praxitèle, dit Plaque de Mantinée. Athènes, Musée national archéologique (inv. MNA 216); catalogue Praxitèle, Musée du Louvre, 2007 fig. n° 65.

Nietzsche a comparé avec raison la manière dont Platon procédait pour fixer, au moyen de la remémoration, une conversation qui a effectivement eu lieu, avec l'idéalisation du «portrait par les peintres grecs», tout en ajoutant que ces derniers n'étaient pas des «réalistes», pas plus que Platon.[42] A la suite d'un travail pionnier sur le statuaire grecque par Pierre-Maxime Schuhl (*Platon et l'art de son temps – Arts plastiques*, Paris, 1933), Eva C. Keuls a nommé un grand nombre de ces références graphiques en étudiant notamment l'aspect technique de la peinture grecque et les savoirs techniques dans les *Dialogues* de Platon, tel le problème de la *skiagraphie*.[43] Il nous reste néanmoins à analyser le *paradigme* graphique en lui-même et le contexte des références aux beaux-arts.

Si l'on voulait renverser la théorie hiérarchique des Idées de Platon, ne faudrait-il pas chercher un levier dans la *diarèse* du monde sensible figuratif qui donne corps, re-présentation, de l'image transcendante, promue paradoxalement comme seule vraie?

Depuis l'affranchissement de René Descartes, on sait que la philosophie ne consiste pas à recopier les livres de Platon. On peut donc tenter d'innover dans le champ de l'herméneutique platonicienne et prendre le risque d'hypothèses et de découvertes. En nommant le παράδειγμα (*paradeigma*) de Platon graphique, pictural, il n'est plus seulement question de s'interroger sur le problème de la liberté dans la tragédie grecque ni de savoir s'il faut défendre peintres et poètes exilés de la cité platonicienne, mais plutôt lâcher l'image pour une synthèse descriptive de l'aventure:

> comprendre comment fonctionne le mythe des Idées platoniciennes par le biais de l'instrument qui trace l'image sculptée ou peinte, puis comment l'image sensible, par renversement des perspectives de *muthos* à *logos*, engendre une image double – la réalité transcendantale et sa copie.[44]

Si Platon s'était contenté, comme Descartes l'a remarqué dès sa *Lettre-préface de l'édition française des Principes de la philosophie* en 1647, «d'écrire les choses qui lui ont semblé être vraisemblables…», l'existence des Idées transcendantales servant paradigmatiquement aux choses sensibles, n'en était-elle pas un exemple de cette vrai-semblance?

Et ne pourrait-on alors soutenir que Platon élaborait sa construction mentale en «imaginant à cet effet quelques principes par lesquels il tâch[er]ait de rendre raison des autres choses»?

Après une première critique des Idées par Aristote, une autre critique de l'esprit philosophique platonicien – les *Soixante-deux conclusions selon mon opinion personnelle sur la doctrine de Platon* vu de l'intérieur, comme dans une sorte d'autobiographie philosophique, est publié d'abord par Pic de la Mirandole à Florence (1468), ensuite dans un paragraphe écrit par Descartes dans sa langue maternelle pour présenter ses *Principes de philosophie*, ainsi que dans un autre paragraphe significatif sur l'intellectual-

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42 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Introduction à la lecture des dialogues de Platon*, séminaire de 1871 (publié d'abord de manière posthume en 1913 à Leipzig). Trad. fr. aux éditions L'Eclat, Combas, 1991, p. 11.

43 Eva C. Keuls, *Plato and Greek Painting*, Leyde, éd. E. J. Brill, 1978, coll. «Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition», vol. V.

44 B. A., «Les images mythiques de Platon», *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne*, tome XXVI, N° 2, Bruxelles, éditions Ousia, 2008 (p. 101-112); spécialement p. 109-110: proposition d'un paradigme que nous appellerions le paradigme graphique de Platon.

isme voire la «mystique» de Platon, auquel Kant va opposer le sensualisme d'Épicure.[45]

Je voudrais ici proposer de considérer le modèle graphique (les mots *exemple* et *modèle* sont la traduction de *paradeigma*) comme notion de base de l'Idée en tant que telle.

Il s'ensuit la découverte dérivée de la méthode du jeune René Descartes qui consiste à mémoriser une définition à travers le prodige des figures dédaliennes. Dans ses pensées privées intitulées les *Olympiques*, cahier ouvert en 1620, Descartes a voulu *imaginatione compecti*, «embrasser par l'imagination», une ou plusieurs images associées. Pour ce qui est des conclusions platoniciennes personnelles selon Pic de la Mirandole, d'une «imagination *doxastique* (phantasiæ δοξαστικον)».

(Pour avoir un aperçu de nombreuses reprises cartésiennes de la tradition platonicienne, on peut reprendre l'étude sur Descartes et Théophile de Viau, poète libertin... Théophile de Viau ayant publié sa traduction-adaptation du *Phédon* de Platon en 1623, un chapitre sur le Platon «travesti» par Théophile ainsi que par le dualisme cartésien s'imposait déjà à cet endroit précis de notre nœud textuel à paraître.)

C'est Gassendi qui, dans les *Cinquièmes Objections* contre les *Méditations métaphysiques* de Descartes, proteste contre les éducateurs dans les écoles qui distinguent l'essence de l'existence. «Toutefois, comment soutiendront-ils que l'essence de l'homme qui est, par exemple, dans Platon soit éternelle, et indépendante de Dieu? En tant qu'elle est universelle, diront-ils? Mais il n'y a rien dans Platon que de singulier. (...)» (AT VII, 319). Ensuite, les *Sixièmes Objections* «faites par divers Théologiens et Philosophes» (de Paris et des provinces; non signés; recueillis par le R. P. Mersenne), contre les *Méditations philosophiques* de Descartes, en 1641, rouvrent la brèche du platonisme dans le XVIIe siècle par le biais de l'ancienne bataille d'iconoclastes byzantins. Les *divers Théologiens et Philosophes*, dont le P. Léonor de La Barde, de l'Oratoire, rappellent que les «Pères de l'Eglise ayant cru, avec tous les platoniciens, que les anges étaient corporels (...), le Concile de Latran a conclu qu'on pouvait les peindre.» (AT IX, 219). En effet, le IVe Concile de Latran qui affirma l'existence des créatures spirituelles en 1215, fut bien précédé par le Second Concile de Nicée (comme le corrigent dans leur note Roger Ariew et Theo Verbeek, les deux éditeurs de ces *Objections et Réponses*, aux éditions Tel/Gallimard, 2018, t. IV-2, p. 1182), et ce fut le Concile de Nicée qui affirma et la nature incorporelle des anges et la légitimité de les présenter picturalement, dès l'an 787... Mais l'important est ailleurs: le groupe des théologiens et philosophes, dans la missive à Descartes citent l'opinion hérétique de ces platoniciens anonymes de l'époque: «ils ont néanmoins dit que les anges et que les âmes pensaient; ce qui nous fait croire que leur opinion était que la pensée se pouvait faire par des mouvements corporels, ou que les anges n'étaient eux-mêmes que des mouvements corporels, dont ils ne distinguaient point la pensée.» (*Loc. cit.*) Sans rectifier la confusion de ses objecteurs entre les Conciles de Nicée et de Latran (comme le notent encore Ariew et Verbeek, p. 1186; mais ils n'essayent pas d'identifier ni ces *platoniciens* ni *leurs sectateurs*...), Descartes répond lui-même en émettant l'opinion contraire aux «Platoniciens, dont on nous vantait maintenant l'autorité...» Les anges, dit Descartes, s'ils avaient des corps, auraient eu toujours l'es-

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45 Le bref chapitre intitulé «Histoire de la raison pure», dans la première *Critique* 1781, p. 852.

prit aussi inséparable du corps que les hommes. «Ce qui est ici rapporté des Platoniciens et de leurs sectateurs, est aujourd'hui tellement décrié par toute l'Eglise catholique, et communément par tous les philosophes, qu'on ne doit plus s'arrêter. D'ailleurs, il est bien vrai que le Concile de Latran a conclu qu'on pouvait peindre les anges, mais il n'a pas conclu pour cela qu'ils fussent corporels.» (AT IX, 228).

5. L'Enoncé du Paradigme graphique de Platon – Les Ecrits et les Agrapha Dogmata

En ce qui concerne notre enquête terminologique sur les termes de forme, d'image, de peinture, de sculpture, de copie, d'imitation et de ressemblance, les bibliographies des œuvres de Platon utilisées ne posent pas de grands problèmes de variantes. Pour ce qui est de la bibliographie des littératures critique et interprétative, on le trouvera regroupée à la fin de cet ouvrage. Ceux qui ont sué sang et eau, distillaient quelques gouttes de vif argent infusé dans notre corps du texte: «*pages toutes parfumées d'harmonie, qui nous offrent comme un écho des lentes et nobles processions de Phidias!*» (le style de Pierre-Maxime Schuhl dans son admirable étude *Platon et l'art de son temps*, 1936/1954). Nous sommes bien conscients que rien ne nous est livré d'avance: ni par la tradition papyrologue séculaire, ni par celle des traductions publiées du texte original grec en différentes langues, d'abord latine (nous avons consulté abondamment Marsile Ficin, au sens de ses «remèdes», comme écrit en 1468), mais aussi les traductions françaises, et parfois celles d'autres horizons – allemandes, anglaises ou slaves, par lesquelles nous avons commencé.

Nous pouvons apporter quelques certitudes concernant la tradition doxographique, comme par exemple sur la question d'Apollodore, peintre et sculpteur proche de Socrate et mentionné par Platon dans plusieurs dialogues (de l'*Apologie de Socrate* au *Phédon* jusqu'à l'ouverture du *Banquet*), dont on s'est demandé s'il y a lieu de l'identifier avec le peintre Apollodore, mentionné, lui, par des historiens tels que Pline (*Histoire naturelle*) et Plutarque (*Vies*). En se fondant notamment sur le fait que Platon n'aurait pas confié à n'importe quel «Apollodore» le rôle de narrateur du fameux *Banquet* de 416 avant notre-ère, et en recoupant les témoignages sur le peintre et le sculpteur homonymes, nous pensons pouvoir renforcer la preuve qu'il s'agit d'un même personnage. Le peintre Apollodore dit Skiagraphe («le Trompe-œil»), serait bien le sculpteur Apollodore dit *manique*. A partir de là, il y a lieu de prendre en compte l'intégralité de l'expérience artistique et dianoïque platonicienne.

Il semblerait pourtant que ce rôle du paradigme pictural n'ait jamais été pris en compte dans le courant d'interprétation ésotériste des doctrines non-écrites de Platon. Ces dernières se basent notamment sur sa critique de l'écriture, non pas sur la plastique et la peinture. Il en est ainsi, même si les porteurs du «nouveau paradigme» veulent renverser le paradigme «néo-platonicien» et celui du «vétéro-platonisme».

En vue d'une révision, on peut se réserver ici le droit d'ajouter un second volet qui porterait sur le problème de la forme écrite critiquée par Platon en parallèle alors avec *graphein* comme image dans la sculpture (le statuaire grec) ou la peinture.

Nous renversons la conception que Paul Natorp disait (1911: p. 206) partager avec Léon Robin (l'auteur des *Nombres de Platon*, 1908; voir note 1 *supra*), «selon laquelle les Idées ne sont pas un second ordre de choses sensibles qui auraient seulement perdu leurs couleurs... et devenues insensibles.» Et nous montrerons que

– ces choses sensibles appartiennent au premier ordre;

– les Idées ne sont pas une méthode de fondation de l'expérience comme science, mais qu'elles ont *perdu leur couleurs* parce que Platon a parti *des* couleurs ou mots animés (*graphe empsychos*) pour construire et conditionner ses Idées comme «insensibles».

C'est sur ces bases que *La République* (508b) définit l'Idée comme la cause efficiente – entre autres, la cause du Beau (*Rép.* 517c), car elle fournit au monde intelligible «son existence et son essence» (Perceval Fustigère, p. 207). Et c'est sur ces bases que le dialogue *Théétète* définit les sensations comme des chevaux de bois (*Théét.* 184d). Natorp commente que l'Idée qualifie l'âme à titre de fonction générale de l'unité, de conscience; au titre d'un «acte originaire de hypothèse».

La fondation de l'Idée, déduite d'une réalité empirique (illustrée par la sculpture, la peinture, l'écrit), signifie donc totalement le contraire de ce que Natorp expliquait: la déduire d'une autre Idée supérieure (*Platon*, 157 sq). Une catégorie dans le *Théétète*, une forme fondamentale du jugement, est «lavée de tout soupçon de transcendance» (*Platon*, p. 136). Une position fondamentale de la pensée conditionnant le jugement empirique, par exemple dans le *Phédon*, devient l'équivalent d'un principe synthétique (*id*. 138). Par conséquent, dans son étude sur Natorp, Servois parle de différents «visages» de l'Idée (p. 14). Et Alexis Philonenko répète que l'image de l'Idée provient (toujours, ajouterions-nous) de la réalité sensible.[46] Cela ne peut pas être l'inverse.

> «Le *Cratyle* commence par fournir de grandes explications au sujet du fait que l'image ne peut être qu'extérieurement et en partie seulement la même chose qu'archétype; même à la façon dont l'image commence par être introduite dans le Sophiste, nous pouvons aisément remarquer la référence au *Cratyle*»,

spécule Schleiermacher dans son *Introduction aux dialogues de Platon* (p. 314). Or, c'est toujours le signe concret qui illustre une idée abstraite en la traduisant dans l'intuition sensible, dit Fustigère (p. 103). Platon prend la caverne pour l'image du monde matériel (*Rép.* livre VII); et l'image analogue de *Phèdre* (99d-100a): les reflets du soleil dans l'eau correspondent aux logoi, qui ne sont rien moins, que des εἰκόνες.[47] Or, Natorp se trompait en com-

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46 Alexis Philonenko, *Leçons platoniciennes*, p. 28. Dans l'Introduction de son ouvrage, Philonenko raconte qu'il a d'abord pensé traduire Platos Ideenlehre de Natorp (*Leçons platoniciennes*, 1977, Préface, p. 9). De sa familiarité avec Natorp, dit l'auteur, «découla une lecture de Platon bien différente, par exemple, de celle de Léon Robin» (*id*.). En effet, dans son article «Logique de Platon» (1903, p. 134), Natorp juge que la doctrine des Idées-Nombres est présentée «par le travail tout à fait fondamental du chercheur français Léon Robin», et en note ajoute: «Cf. ma recension dans la *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, 21 mai 1910». (L'article: Prof. Dr P. Natorp, «Neue französische und englische Schriften zu platonischen Ideenlehre»).

47 Fustigère, 1930, p. 103-104. Ainsi, c'est grâce au mélange d'images dans *le Banquet*, que M. Pohlenz a remarqué (1916) que Socrate soit simultanément comparé à une statue de silène et au satyre Marsyas (*Symp.* 215a-22b). Fustigère cite cet exemple de la pensée archaïque toujours en place (p. 274), afin d'invalider l'argument d'Immisch (Neue Wege der Platonforschung, *Neue Jahrbücher für das classische Altertum* 35, 1915, p. 545-572) de

prenant la fonction invariable de la conscience ou de la psyché, comme radicalement distincte de tout le sensible en tant que domaine de l'être relatif, comme médiation organique. L'idée régulatrice du processus infini, de la connaissance, dans la *République*, montre que par cette médiation sensible, la conscience ou la psyché, serait toujours liée à un moment du Temps. Mais si Natorp (via Platon, 1911: p. 113 et 115-116) excluait la séparation temporelle, au contraire, nous comprenons les *dates* de l'époque platonicienne – telles des figurines de chevaux de bois, des figures mathématiques brossées dans le sable, symboles picturaux et lignes, symboles géométriques (Fustigère, 1930: p. 104), ou Praxitèle équipé d'un compas et d'une massette, en tant qu'ils sont précisément marques du Temps ou Chronos. A la perte de la critique de l'entendement, Natorp ajoute la perte de l'Eros philosophique (*id*. 394). Ecoutait-il la voix du Démon de Socrate, et le rêve prémonitoire de Socrate sur un Platon-cygne (DL II 3,5), symbole de l'*academia cupidini* où Aristote utilise le sous-titre *Erôtikoi-logoi* pour le Banquet platonicien?[48] Socrate était-il le seul qui «avait l'habitude» de cette voix intérieure, pour l'interpréter comme «signal divin» (*Euth*. 272e)? Hélas, les exégètes comme Schleiermacher (*id*. 60) passent à côté de cette ouverture vers l'inconscient, en affirmant qu'accorder une telle valeur à la conscience du non-savoir est «une manière si antiplatonicienne…»! Mais, comme le remarque Nalin Ranasinghe, Socrate n'a pas hérité du père, mais de la mère. «Socrate n'est pas le faiseur des images gravées ou ciseleur de la pierre; il suit la profession de la sage-femme de sa mère.»[49] S'y annonce une sorte d'inversion, qui sera la méthode – la marche – même de renversement de la primauté du Réel vers le Transcendant, du Temporel vers l'Eternel.

Quand Bachofen discute, entre autres, de la lecture que son ancien professeur Auguste Boeckh a faite d'un papyrus égyptien autour de l'expression *Philométor* («l'aimant de sa mère»), il voit combien ce nom ouvre «le gouffre entre les mots et les actes»… Selon Bachofen, une controverse comme celle contenue dans le nom *Philométor*, «doit nous convaincre que le sens littéral du terme, depuis longtemps, avait fait place à une signification différente.»[50] Ainsi, par exemple, dans sa lecture de *Banquet*, Bachofen ne discute pas uniquement de la lecture fautive de Ficin dans *Symp*. 201d: μαντικῆς ou fatidica muliere, «mancienne, prophètesse» au lieu de: γυναικὸς Μαντινικῆς Διοτίμας… Bachofen explique en plus le caractère sacré de cette femme de Mantinée, que Platon appelle Diotime, et qui «relève du monde pélasge-samothracien, axé sur le principe maternel et le principat des Mystères». (Chap. 146, «Mantinée», p. 1083 et 1086). Dans la série de témoignages en faveur du rôle prééminent de la femme lors de l'initiation aux Mystères, Bachofen évoque

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deux images distinctes – ascendantes – celle d'un oiseau et celle d'un attelage ailé (*Phaedr.*246a, 249d), comme procédant d'un remaniement par Platon. Cela nous introduit dans le processus du travail de Platon, car il faut envisager deux pensées, quelque chose qui porte Platon pour amorcer ces images. Serions-nous prêts de supprimer une ancienne erreur ou de laisser coexister les deux images? (Fustigère, p. 274n, cite aussi deux autres images que Pohlenz juge moins importantes dans *la Rép*. 365c et 527; voir aussi *Timée* 69a).

48 Voir Jean Irigoin, *Tradition et critique des textes grecs*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1997, p. 86
49 Nalin Ranasinghe, «Socrates Apology and Recovery of Reality», *Philotheos* 11 (2011), p. 21.
50 Johann Jakob Bachofen, *Le droit maternel – Recherche sur la gynécocratie de l'antiquité dans sa nature religieuse et juridique*, 1861; trad. fr. et préface Etienne Barilier, Lausanne, L'Age d'Homme, 1996, p. 1254.

aussi des documents iconographiques (p. 1096-1099), notamment une sardoine du Cabinet de Paris – camée antique de la Bibliothèque Nationale – qui représente Socrate et Diotime.

6. Aide-mémoire

Platon fonde les symboles vivants à retenir dans la mémoire (au-delà du mythe de la réminiscence), sur les *eikonai*, les images qui affectent l'inconscient du sujet. D'une part, ces images-démons – images psychagogiques et hypomnématiques, lui fournissent le point de départ vers les Nombres-Idées, les objets imagés «sans matière». De l'autre, elles servent par elles-mêmes à retenir un certain *nombre* de concepts (temporels). Nous soulignons que Boeckh a été le premier a confier cette fonction d'images psychagogiques et hypomnématiques au savoir inconscient de Socrate, même si d'autres, de Plutarque (*Dialogue sur le daïmon de Socrate*) à Apulée, bien avant Boeckh, ont prêté l'oreille à la voix intérieure du «démon» socratique. (Les exposants de l'école de Tübingen, n'ont-ils pas souvent confondu cette voix intérieure, avec la signification *extérieure* des «doctrines non-écrites»?)

A travers l'enseignement de la science de la Logique au Moyen-Age, on a eu recours à cette même espèce d'images hypomnématiques, en s'exerçant à retenir les premières lettres de certains mots établis – afin de mémoriser, par exemple, l'ordre des syllogismes. D'où l'intérêt de jeune René Descartes pour l'Art combinatoire de Raymond Lulle et de pareils manuels d'aide-mémoires (voir ses cahiers de jeunesse, qu'il intitule *Olympica*).

En somme, dans les mots énigmatiques de sa Lettre VII, Platon proposait non pas seulement de retenir l'expérience de son Savoir, mais de retenir, de la mémoriser. Bergson touchera à ce point dans l'examen du dualisme faux entre *La Matière et la Mémoire*: en ce qui concerne notre lecture, les mots deviennent des signes de la mémoire dans laquelle nous reconnaissons leur sens capturé par la lecture. (Accessoirement, les adhérents de l'école de Tübingen, n'ont-ils pas aussi confondu le Savoir supposément suspendu, avec ce que les premiers écrits offraient à la mémoire comme rétention de la mémoire?)

Enfin, les leçons orales que Platon dispense vers la fin de sa vie, n'avaient-elles pas eu un pareil but: enseigner non pas une doctrine secrète (contenue dans ses derniers dialogues comme *La République*, mais pas les *Lois*!), qui sera différente du corps du texte, mais pensant se passer du texte, une leçon de vie, une doctrine si l'on veut, où seraient unis le corps et l'âme?

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Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον in Mt 6:11 as 'Our Super-Substantial Bread': Echoes of Some Patristic Interpretations in Contemporary Orthodox Understanding

Summary: The 'bread' in Lord's Prayer is today usually understood as 'daily bread,' as we can see in contemporary translations. However, in Orthodox Christian understanding 'bread' in Lord's Prayer has a different meaning, spiritual or Eucharistic, and it is emphasized by Orthodox theologians and Orthodox interpreters of the Bible. A different understanding of Biblical text is not something new in Christian history: it is something that is present in Christianity since the times of early Church, and it is well attested through contributions of ancient Christian schools of Biblical exegesis, for instance Alexandrine and Antiochene school. A different understanding is the fruit of different contexts, different traditions and different readings of Biblical text. In this paper we will show the origins of Orthodox Christian reading of 'bread petition' in the Lord's Prayer, and how Orthodox Christian understanding is influenced by ancient Christian reading of Biblical text.

Key words: Lord's Prayer, Eastern Orthodox exegesis, Patristics, interpretation of Scripture, allegorical interpretation, Eucharistic interpretation

1. Introduction

The 'bread' – ἄρτος – in Lord's Prayer is usually understood among present-day Christians as 'daily bread,' as we can see in a large number of contemporary translations. However, the same term has a different meaning in Orthodox understanding.

Namely, in traditional Orthodox Church interpretations of Lord's Prayer, "bread" is understood as Eucharistic Bread: Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον from Mt 6:11 Orthodox Christians see as 'Our Super-Substantial Bread' [or 'Super-Essential'] and it is common in Orthodox Christian understanding. This understanding is obvious from Slavic and other translations of New Testament influenced by Orthodox Church, which shows that the Orthodox understanding of term ἐπιούσιος in Mt 6:11 (and Lk 11:3 as well) is Eucharistic and eschatological.[1] The Orthodox interpreters of the Bible also emphasize this understanding.

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[1] Eucharistic or eschatological understanding of these words, common for Orthodox traditional interpretation, was characteristic for early Christian interpretations of Lord's Prayer: cf. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Roland E. Murphy, eds., *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 2nd ed. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1997), 645.

One of the most influential Orthodox theologians of the 20th century, Thomas Hopko, expresses this understanding in a following way:

> "… This petition, because it literally says our 'essential' or 'super-essential' bread, is often understood in the spiritual sense to mean the nourishment of our souls by the Word of God, Jesus Christ who is the 'Bread of Life;' the 'Bread of God which has come down from heaven and given life to the world' (Jn 6:33–36)… Thus the prayer for 'daily bread' becomes the petition for daily spiritual nourishment through abiding communion with Christ so that one might live perpetually with God."[2]

Alexander Schmemann, a 20th century Orthodox theologian, whose writings influenced contemporary Orthodox liturgics in general, while commenting on "bread" of the Lord's Prayer, said:

> "The Eucharist, faith in participation in the new food, in the new and Heavenly bread, fulfils the Christian Revelation about food. And only in the light of this revelation, of the joy of this thanksgiving, can one adequately understand the full depth of this fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer; 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Give us, today, the food which is essential for us."[3]

Same or similar understanding one can find in the writings of other contemporary Orthodox theologians. The following question arises as a central problem of our research: what are the reasons for the "bread" to be understood as Eucharistic Bread in the Orthodox Church interpretations of Lord's Prayer? In that sense, the objective of this paper is to clarify the reasons for this specific spiritual understanding of the term ἐπιούσιος from Mt 6:11 in Orthodox Church interpretations and translations.

The origins of such Orthodox Christian understanding – unusual and uncommon for present-day interpretations of Lord's Prayer – are historical, theological and liturgical. This understanding is, as we will show, based on early Church liturgical practice, and testified in some of the early Christian writings, especially in works of Church Fathers.[4] Early Church practice of *disciplina arcani* also connects Lord's Prayer with Eucharistic appeals. In the writings of the early Church Fathers, so to say, there is a consensus in understanding the 'bread petition' of the Lord's Prayer as an Eucharistic petition.[5] These understandings were transmitted through the works of Church interpreters of Scriptures from Middle Ages to the contemporary times. Eucharistic understanding of Lord's Prayer is especially preserved in Orthodox Church understanding – as a traditional reading of biblical text.

2. Terminology and Context: Some Basic Remarks

The Lord's Prayer has come to us in three ancient recensions: Lucan short version (Lk 11: 2–4) and two closely related longer versions – Matthean (Mt 6: 9–13) and *Didache* (*Did*

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2 Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith. Volume IV: Spirituality* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2016), 112–113.

3 Alexander Schmemann, *Our Father* (New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 60.

4 Cf. Anton Vögtle, "The Lord's Prayer: A Prayer for Jews and Christians?," in *The Lord's Prayer and Jewish Liturgy*, eds. Jakob Josef Petuchowski and Michael Brocke (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), 93–117: 98.

5 "Fathers of the Church were practically unanimous in understanding the fourth petition of the *Our Father* [= Lord's Prayer] as an Eucharistic petition." – Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, trans. Adrian Walker (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 153–154.

8.2–3),[6] which according to some scholars shows greater symmetry and liturgically fuller language.[7] Petition which is the subject of our research in these three recensions may be compared as follows:

Mt 6:11	Lk 11:3	*Did* 8.2
Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν	Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν	Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν
τὸν **ἐπιούσιον**	τὸν **ἐπιούσιον**	τὸν **ἐπιούσιον**
δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον·	δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ᾽ ἡμέραν·	δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον·

The word ἐπιούσιος, as an adjective modifying noun ἄρτος, whose meaning remains an enigma for translators,[8] is used in all of these three versions. This word is New Testament *hapax legomenon*, found only in the Lord's Prayer,[9] and it is not known whether this word is attested somewhere else in the ancient Greek literature.[10] This word is present in the P 75 (Papyrus Bodmer XIV–XV, or Hanna Papyrus 1) – one of the oldest surviving witnesses of New Testament text.[11]

2.1. Question of the Original Language

Scholars assume that the original language of Lord's Prayer may be Aramaic (there are at least two indications that Aramaic language was the original language – word אבא that may stand behind Lucan Πάτερ, as well as the word ὀφείλημα [Mt 6:12; Lk 11:4], which in Greek means "monetary debt," while its Aramaic equivalent, the word חובא, can also

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6 Hans Dieter Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, Including the Sermon on the Plain*, Hermeneia: A Critical & Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 370–371.

7 Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary*, Hermeneia: A Critical & Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 309.

8 David E. Garland, "The Lord's Prayer in the Gospel of Matthew," *Review and Expositor* 89, no. 2 (May 1992), 215–228: 222, https://doi.org/10.1177/003463739208900205; cf. also Brown et al., *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 645.

9 Cf. Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Volume II. Δ–H*, Translator and Editor Geoffery W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), 590–591. The word ἐπιούσῃ, which could be found in Acts 7:26 as referring to the *next* day (ἐπιούσῃ ἡμέρᾳ – which may be important for another understanding of ἐπιούσιος in Mt 6:11 as referring to *tomorrow's* bread), could be a cognate word: cf. David E. Aune, *Jesus, Gospel Tradition and Paul in the Context of Jewish and Greco-Roman Antiquity: Collected Essays II* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 303) (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 87–88.

10 There is no word ἐπιούσιος prior to or apart from Mt 6:11, Lk 11:3 and *Did*. 8.2; there "may be an attestation on papyrus, but it is late (5ᵗʰ century CE) and damaged" – cf. Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 397. Cf. also Anthony Harvey, "Difficult Texts: Matthew 6.11: Daily Bread," *Theology* 119, no. 6 (November 2016), 403–406: 403, https://doi.org/10.1177/0040571X16659237.

11 Cf. "Hanna Papyrus 1 (Mater Verbi) (P75)," f. 1B2v, line 9: ἐπιούσιον. Scanned image accessible at website of Vatican Apostolic Library, accessed June 3, 2019, https://www.vaticanlibrary.va/home.php?pag=BODMER_XIV_XV&ling=eng&BC=11. Cf. also Raffaele Farina, "A Venerable Witness of the Gospels of Luke and John: Bodmer Papyrus XIV–XV (P 75)," Vatican Apostolic Library, accessed June 3, 2019, https://www.vaticanlibrary.va/moduli/BodmerFarina_ing.pdf.

mean "sin"); some scholars suggest that original language was Hebrew.[12]

As Prof. Luz puts it, for translation of the Lord's Prayer back into Aramaic there is a widespread consensus for approximately half of the text; anyway, Aramaic equivalent for the word ἐπιούσιος is obscure[13] and scholars are completely in the dark with retranslation of this petition.[14] On the other hand, since this very rare word appears in *all* Greek variants of the Lord's Prayer, we could assume that there was a *single* Greek translation.[15]

2.2. Question of the Liturgical Origin of the Lord's Prayer

The form of Lord's Prayer suggest that it is a communal prayer – petitions of this prayer are in the first person plural. From New Testament times it seems to be a prayer of the Church community,[16] even if this prayer can be prayed in private, as we can see in *Did* 8.3.[17]

In Biblical scholarship there is question – did Matthew use the text of the Lord's Prayer from community's liturgy and put it in the centre of the Sermon on the Mount? There is also a question – did the author of *Didache* quote Lord's Prayer from the community tradition?[18]

3. Lord's Prayer in the Early Church

In worship of early Church, Lord's Prayer became the central Christian prayer, and also an important dogmatic text: it was one of the essential texts, and also a multifunctional text. It was the prayer delivered to people about to be baptized, and it was the first prayer they offered after baptism – before participation in Eucharist, as we can find in various ancient

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12 Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 310–311. However, the question of the original language of the Lord's Prayer is still answered, and the question whether it has been translated or not is discussed from the Middle Ages to the present; cf. Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 374–375.

13 Cf. John Lowe, *The Lord's Prayer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 36. Cf. also John D. Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, Edited by Luke Ben Tallon (London – New York: T&T Clark International, 2011), 25.

14 In an analysis of a biblical text, there are a few questions on which we cannot find a satisfying answer. Firstly, there is question why early translators of this prayer from Aramaic to Greek language did not simply use the common Greek word for the term 'daily' [ἡμέραν] instead of an non-usual and strange term ἐπιούσιον [which is also *hapax legomenon*]. Another important question would be why there are words 'today' / 'every day' and 'daily' in the same line, and why there is such a repetition ['daily' bread give us 'today / every day'] – it is strange because the meaning of these terms is overlapping; cf. C. F. Evans, *The Lord's Prayer* (London: SCM Press, 1997), 52–53. E. Nordhofen shortly explains: "'Daily' cannot be the meaning of this word for a number of reasons. Luke's version of the clause would in this case have to read: 'Give us daily (every day) our daily bread.'" – see Eckhard Nordhofen, "What Bread Is This? What Bread This Is!," *Communio: International Catholic Review* [Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread] 44, no. 1 (Spring 2017), 43–71: 50.

15 Cf. Willy Rordorf, "The Lord's Prayer in the Light of its Liturgical Use in the Early Church," *Studia Liturgica* 14, no. 1 (March 1980), 1–19: 1–2, https://doi.org/10.1177/003932078001400101.

16 Cf. Gordon J. Bahr, "Use of the Lord's Prayer in the Primitive Church," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84, no. 2 (June 1965), 153–159: 155–156, http://doi.org/10.2307/3264137.

17 Cf. Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 309.

18 Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 309–310.

testimonies (cf. *Apostolic Constitutions* 7, 44 [45];[19] John Chrysostom (c. 349–407), *Hom. in Col.* 6, 45 = *PG* 62, 342).[20]

In the 3rd and 4th century, the Lord's Prayer was a part of the "discipline of the secret" (*disciplina arcani*), hidden and protected from the eyes of those who were outside the Church, and even from those who were seeking to be baptized.[21] Ambrose of Milan (c. 340–397) spoke about the importance of keeping of the secret of Lord's Prayer from carelessness (*Cain et Abel* 1.9.37 = *PL* 14, 335).

So, the Lord's Prayer was introduced to newly baptized Christians after chrismation (or immediately before baptism[22]), and they had the opportunity to hear this prayer in worship of the Church for the first time after their baptism.

In that manner, according to *Mystagogic Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 313–386), Lord's Prayer comes just before communion (*Cat. myst.* 5, 11 = *PG* 33, 1117B):

"... After the completion of the spiritual sacrifice, the worship without blood, we call upon God. [5, 8] ... Then we commemorate those who have gone to their rest, ... [5, 9] ... Then after this you make the prayer which the Saviour taught his own disciples. With a clear conscience you name God as Father saying: 'Our Father who art in the heavens.' ... [5, 11] ... After this the bishop says: 'Holy things for the holy.'..." [5, 19][23]

By researching the writings of early Church authors, it is possible to trace the place of the Lord's Prayer in liturgy – just before the Eucharist, at least to the 3rd century, maybe even earlier.

4. Eucharistic Understanding of the ἐπιούσιος in the Lord's Prayer

It seems that the Lord's Prayer was understood as Eucharistic from the earliest times, as for example the text of *Didache* 7–9 suggests. One of the early Church theologians, heretic Marcion (c. 85–c. 160) read the asking for bread in Lord's Prayer as "Give us today *Your* dai-

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[19] See Franz Xaver von Funk, *Didascalia et Constitutiones apostolorum*, Volumen I / Edidit Franciscus Xaverius Funk (Panderbornae: Ferdinandi Schoeningh, 1905), 450–451. For English translation of these passages, see *Apostolic Constitutions* (Book VII) [Concerning the Christian Life, and the Eucharist, and the Initiation into Christ]. Translated by James Donaldson. From *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 7. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886), Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight, accessed June 3, 2019, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/07157.htm.

[20] This may already been the case in the time of *Didache*; namely, text of *Didache* suggests such a presumption, because we find Lord's Prayer in *Did.* 8 – after baptismal instruction (*Did.* 7) and before Lord's Supper (*Did.* 9).

[21] Roy Hammerling, "The Lord's Prayer: A Cornerstone of Early Baptismal Education," in *A History of Prayer: The First to the Fifteenth Century*, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, Vol. 13, ed. Roy Hammerling (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 167–182: 167, https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004171220.i-460.50. Cf. also Roy Hammerling, *The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church: The Pearl of Great Price* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 4, and also J. C. O'Neill, "The Lord's Prayer," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 16, no. 51 (July 1993), 3–25: 9, https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X9301605101.

[22] Cf. David C. Alexander, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Church: Emergence and Implications, 386–391* (Pieterlen: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2008), 86.

[23] Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogic Catechesis* 5: text quoted from translation of E. Yarnold, published in Edward Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, The Early Church Fathers (New York: Routledge, 2000), 183–186.

ly bread," which shows that he probably understood this petition as Eucharistic.[24]

The connection between the Lord's Prayer and Eucharist became clearer in interpretations of biblical text from the works of Church fathers like Origen, Marius Victorinus, Jerome, and others. They offered a spiritual, and subsequently Eucharistic understanding of this term. This understanding of 'daily bread' remained authoritative for centuries, and as we would see, it is highly valuated among traditional Christians today.

4. 1. Origen's Spiritual Interpretation

In his interpretation of Lord's Prayer, Origen (c. 185–254) maintained that the word ἐπιούσιος was unknown in Greek literature and language,[25] so he suggested that it had been invented by the evangelists (*De oratione* 27.7; 27.13; cf. *PG* 11, 505B–522A).[26] That was the reason for Origen to see this word as one with deep spiritual meaning. In his understanding, τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον is soul bread, wisdom, or eternal truth. Origen comments [*De oratione* 27.1]:

> "Give us today our Needful Bread, or as Luke has it, Give us daily our Needful Bread. Seeing that some suppose that it is meant that we should pray for material bread, their erroneous opinion deserves to be done away with and the truth about the needful bread set forth, in the following manner. We may put the question to them — how can it be that He, who says that heavenly and great things ought to be asked for as if, on their view, He has forgotten His teaching now enjoins the offering of intercession to the Father for an earthly and little thing, since neither is the bread which is assimilated into our flesh a heavenly thing nor is it asking a great thing to request it?"[27]

Then, a few lines bellow, Origen give his wider reflection on origin of mysterious Greek word ἐπιούσιος [*De oratione* 27.7]:

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24 Marcionite *Your daily bread* [or *Thy bread* in other translations] is probably an allusion to the Lord's Supper – cf. Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1967), 84. For Marcionite reading of *Your bread* cf. also David C. Parker, *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997), 64 and 68. Cf. also *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th edition (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 195.

25 Seventeen centuries after Origen we are in the same position; cf. Raymond E. Brown, "The Pater Noster as an Eschatological Prayer," *Theological Studies* 22, no. 2 (May 1961), 175–208: 195, https://doi.org/10.1177/004056396102200201; cf. also Bruce M. Metzger, "How Many Times Does ἘΠΙΟΎΣΙΟΣ Occur Outside the Lord's Prayer?," in *Historical and Literary Studies: Pagan, Jewish, and Christian*, New Testament Tools and Studies, Vol. 8, ed. Bruce Manning Metzger (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 64–66: 66, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004379268_007; cf. also Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 397, and Aune, *Jesus, Gospel Tradition and Paul*, 87. There are a few different scholars' approaches to the question of meaning of the term ἐπιούσιος: cf. Rick W. Byargeon, "Echoes of Wisdom in the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9–13)," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41, no. 3 (September 1998), 353–365: 360, and also C. Day, "In Search of the Meaning of ἐπιούσιος in the Lord's Prayer. Rounding up the usual Suspects," *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 14, no. 1 (2003), 97–111: 97–98, https://doi.org/10.1080/10226486.2003.11745719.

26 Cf. Origen, *An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer, and Selected Works*, Translation and Introduction by Rowan A. Greer; Preface by Hans Urs Von Balthasar (New York – Ramsey – Toronto: Paulist Press, 1979), 140. Cf. also Origen, *On Prayer. Translation*. [Translated by William A. Curtis], The Tertullian Project: Early Church Fathers – Additional Texts, Edited by Roger Pearse, accessed June 3, 2019, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/origen_on_prayer_02_text.htm.

27 This and few following quotations from Origen's treatise *On Prayer* we gave according to: Origen, *On Prayer*. Cf. also Origen, *An Exhortation to Martyrdom*, 137.

"Let us now consider what the word *epiousion*, needful, means. First of all it should be known that the word *epiousion* is not found in any Greek writer whether in philosophy or in common usage, but seems to have been formed by the evangelists. At least Matthew and Luke, in having given it to the world, concur in using it in identical form. The same thing has been done by translators from Hebrew in other instances also; for what Greek ever used the expression *enotizou* or *akoutisthete* instead of *eistaota dexai* or *akousai poice se*.

Exactly like the expression *epiousion*, needful, is one found in Moses' writings, spoken by God: Ye shall be my *periousios* — peculiar people. Either word seems to me to be a compound of *ousia* — *essence* — the former signifying the bread that contributes to the essence, the latter denoting the people that has to do with the essence and is associated with it. As for *ousia*, *essence*, in the strict sense, by those who assert the priority of the substance of immaterial things, it is ranked with immaterial things which are in possession of permanent being and neither receive addition nor suffer subtraction. For addition and subtraction are characteristic of material things in reference to which growth and decay take place owing to their being in a state of flux, in need of imported support and nourishment…"[28]

In Origen's understanding, the 'bread' which we ask for in this petition of Lord's Prayer, is the Logos, who calls Himself "the Bread of life." The bread we request in the Lord's Prayer according to his understanding is also the bread of the Word of God, which is Wisdom and Truth. In Origen's understanding the idea of 'bread ἐπιούσιον / *epiousion*' as spiritual food is the uppermost.[29] He connects the "Bread of life" discourse from Jn 6 with bread of Lord's Prayer, and also interprets bread to mean the nourishing Word of God, so in *De oratione* 27.13 he elaborates how the bread we ask for is to nourish us so that we may be divinized by the Word of God.[30]

4. 2. Marius Victorinus' Theological Understanding

Origen's influence on later theologians and commentators was huge. Among the significant Christian authors of 4th century we will mention the person who was Jerome's teacher and who had a great influence on Augustine[31] – Marius Victorinus (c. 281/291–c. 363).

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28 Origen, *On Prayer*. Cf. also Origen, *An Exhortation*, 140.

29 In Origen's understanding, the word "supersubstantial" comes from ἐπί and οὐσια; cf. Edwin M. Yamauchi, "The 'Daily Bread' Motif In Antiquity," *Westminster Theological Journal* 28, no. 2 (May 1966), 145–156: 145; cf. also Arland J. Hultgren, "The Bread Petition of the Lord's Prayer," in *Christ and His Communities: Essays in Honor of Reginald H. Fuller*, eds. Arland J. Hultgren and Barbara Hall (Cincinnati, Ohio: Forward Movement Publications, 1990), 41–54: 44; David F. Wright, "What Kind of 'Bread'? The Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer from the Fathers to the Reformers," in *Oratio: Das Gebet in patristischer und reformatorischer Sicht*, Festschrift Zum 65. Geburtstag Von Alfred Schindler, hrsg. von Emidio Campi, Leif Grane und Adolf Martin Ritter (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1999), 151–161: 152.

30 Cf. Anthony Meredith, "Origen and Gregory of Nyssa on The Lord's Prayer," *Heythrop Journal* 43, no. 3 (July 2002), 344–356: 351–352, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2265.00199. Cf. also Norman Russell, *The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 143.

31 Augustine interprets Mt 6:11 in a spiritual, Eucharistic and also in a literal manner – as daily, ordinary needs – cf. Augustine, *De Sermone Domini in Monte* 2.7.25–27 = *PL* 34, 1279–1280; cf. also Hammerling, *The Lord's Prayer in the Early Church*, 17.

Victorinus' usage of vocabulary of Lord's Prayer in arguing with Arians is famous: in Victorinus' treatise *Against Arius* in 4 volumes, we can find that the word ἐπιούσιον / *epiousion* from Mt 6:11 / Lk 11:3 is one of the most important terms for his pro-Nicene theology. Victorinus saw this biblical word as a foundation of Nicene key word ὁμοούσιον / *homousion*,[32] and in that sense he argued that Nicene theology is biblical.

Besides that, in Victorinus' understanding, in accordance with Origen's interpretation, 'bread ἐπιούσιον' is spiritual food, namely *supersubstantial bread* – the bread of life, he explains, that came down from heaven (Jn 6:51); it is "bread from the same substance, that is, consubstantial life coming from the life of God..." (*Adversus Arium* II.8 = *PL* 8, 1094C).[33] In Victorinus' understanding, ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον is "bread from the substance of God."[34] In that manner, Victorinus criticizes Latin translation of the Scriptures, because Latin Christians did not understand or did not know how to translate the Greek word ἐπιούσιον. According to Victorinus, in Old Latin translation of Mt 6:11 / Lk 11:3 there is a wrong translation, based on the wrong understanding of the word ἐπιούσιον – namely that key word for bread in Lord's Prayer is not translated properly as *supersubstantial* bread, but wrongly as *daily* (lat. *cotidianum*) bread (cf. *Adversus Arium* II.8 = *PL* 8, 1094C–D).

4. 3. Jerome's Spiritual Understanding

In the Vulgate, Jerome (347–420) translated ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον from the Matthean version of Lord's Prayer in Latin as 'supersubstantial' – *panis supersubstantialis* (which is a literal translation: *epi* = *super*, and *ousia* = *substantia*).[35] There was no such Latin word as *supersubstantia* before Jerome's translation of Mt 6:11,[36] and this translation could be understood as 'supernatural.'[37]

Nevertheless, Jerome also mentioned a different understanding of the word ἐπιούσιον – he says that he found the expression *maar* for *supersubstantial* bread in the Gospel according to the Hebrews. Jerome says that '*maar* bread' means 'the bread for the following day

32 That could be the reason why Gothic bishop Ulfila in his translation to Gothic language of Mt 6:11 / Lk 11:3 chose the word *quotidianum*, for he was an Arian. Cf. A. Treloar, "Our Daily Bread," *Prudentia* 2, no. 1 (May 1970), 6–10: 9.

33 For English translation of these passages, cf. Marius Victorinus, *Theological Treatises on the Trinity* (The Fathers of the Church, Volume 69), translated by Mary T. Clark (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 209. Cf. also Victorinus' *Adversus Arium* I.30 = *PL* 8, 1063A–C = Marius Victorinus, *Theological Treatises on the Trinity*, 138.

34 Gerald P. Boersma, *Augustine's Early Theology of Image: A Study in the Development of Pro-Nicene Theology*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 83.

35 Cf. Brown, "The Pater Noster," 196. Cf. also Anthony Harvey, "Daily Bread," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 69, no. 1 (April 2018), 25–38: 26, https://doi.org/10.1093/jts/flx242, and Tamiko Isaka, "Jerome's Interpretation of the Bread in the Lord's Prayer: ἐπιούσιος and *Supersubstantialis*," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 14 (2018), 182–203: 185.

36 As we already mentioned, in Old Latin translation ['Vetus Itala'] word ἐπιούσιον was rendered as *cotidianum*; cf. Evans, *The Lord's Prayer*, 50.

37 Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2017), 173. On Jerome's translation of ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον, see Nordhofen, "What Bread Is This?," 58 and 60–65.

/ tomorrow', so that the meaning here is "give us this day our bread for tomorrow" that is, for the future.[38] But Jerome continues (*Commentariorum In Evangelium Matthaei* 1.6.11 = *PL* 26, 43B):

> "We can also understand *supersubstantial bread* in another sense as bread that is above all substances and surpasses all creatures."[39]

In this sense Jerome linked *supersubstantial bread* to the Eucharist. In an accordance to that understanding, when he translated the biblical text at Mt 6:11 from Greek into Latin, he rendered it rather literally: *panem nostrum supersubstantialem da nobis hodie* ('give us today our supersubstantial bread').

5. Transmission of Spiritual Understanding

This understanding of the word ἐπιούσιος as a word with a spiritual meaning, referring to Eucharistic bread,[40] was transmitted through the Middle Ages and has come to contemporary interpretations of Scripture in the Orthodox Church. This "Eucharistic interpretation," common for many Eastern Church Fathers and writers, can be found in Origen's writings, already mentioned above, or in the writings of Marius Victorinus, as well in the interpretation and translation of Jerome.

5. 1. Traditio of Spiritual Understanding from Earliest Times

But that is just the beginning of catenae of ancient Christian writers and interprets who understood ἐπιούσιος from Mt 6:11 (and Lk 11:3 too) as a word with a spiritual or Eucharistic meaning:[41] we can go one step back, and find that such understanding is clearly present and elaborated already in the works of Tertullian (c. 155–c. 240), who in his treatise *On prayer*, written between 200 and 206, interprets the bread of Lord's Prayer as spiritual[42]

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38 In that sense Jerome translated ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον from Lk 11:3 – the Lucan version of Lord's Prayer –to Latin as 'daily' – *panem nostrum cotidianum*.

39 Quoted according to Manlio Simonetti, ed., *Matthew 1–13*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament. I*a* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 135.

40 Just for the record, there was of course a tradition of 'literal' understanding of the word ἐπιούσιος as 'daily', at least since the times of Augustine, who understood the Greek word ἐπιούσιος both in Eucharistic and literal sense [cf. Augustine, *De Sermone Domini in Monte* 2.7.25–27 = *PL* 34, 1279–1280]. This literal tradition was already attested in earlier times in Old Latin translations, which render Greek ἐπιούσιον in Mt 6:11 / Lk 11:3 as *cotidianum*. So, 'literal' understanding of the word ἐπιούσιος as 'daily' was present in the West as well in the East – for example, in interpretations of one of Eastern Fathers who usually used allegorical interpretations – Gregory of Nyssa: cf. his *De Oratione Dominica* 4 = *PG* 44, 1176; cf. also Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 320. There are more examples – one of the most influential interpreters, John Chrysostom, which in his *Homilies on Matthew* XIX.5 understood the word ἐπιούσιος as 'daily' – *PG* 57, 280: ἐπιούσιος = ἐφήμερος, ie. Τὸν ἄρτον τὸν ἐπιούσιον = τὸν ἐφήμερον; cf Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 320; cf. also Colin Hemer, "Ἐπιούσιος," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 7, no. 22 (October 1984), 81–94: 93 (n. 20), https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X8400702205.

41 For a short review of different interpreters' approaches, cf. Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 319–321.

42 Cf. Michael Joseph Brown, "'Panem Nostrum': The Problem of Petition and the Lord's Prayer," *The Journal of Religion* 80, no. 4 (October 2000), 595–614: 608, https://doi.org/10.1086/490715. In the same article, Brown also suggests that in understanding of Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215) one can find the idea of spiritual bread applied to Lord's Prayer – namely in *Paedagogus* 1.6, where Clement says: "The Word (Logos)

and Eucharistic.[43] Tertullian in his interpretation says (*De oratione* 6.2 = *PL* 1, 1160):

> "This petition 'Give us today our daily bread' *we understand rather in a spiritual sense*, for Christ is our bread because He is life and the bread of life. 'I am the bread of life,' He says, and, a little earlier, 'The bread is the Word of the living God that has come down from heaven.' In addition, His body is a kind of bread: 'This is my body.' Consequently, in asking for daily bread, we are asking to live forever in Christ and never to be separated from His body."[44]

Catenae of spiritual and Eucharistic understanding of early Church Fathers continues. Cyprian of Carthage (c. 200–258), in his interpretation which can be found in his *Treatise on Lord's Prayer*, says (*De Oratione Dominica* 18 = *PL* 4, 531A):

> "'Daily bread' may be understood both spiritually and simply, because both meanings help us to understand salvation. For Christ is the bread of life; and this bread is not the bread of all, but it is our bread. And as we say – *our Father*, because he is the father of those who understand and believe, so too we say – *our bread*, because *Christ is the bread of us who touch his body*. Now we ask that this bread be given to us today, lest we who are in Christ and *receive his Eucharist daily* as the food of salvation should be separated from Christ's body through some grave offense that prohibits us from receiving the heavenly bread."[45]

According to Cyprian's interpretation, ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον is food of salvation. Further, we call the bread of Lord's Prayer as 'our bread' because Christ is *the bread* of those who are in Eucharistic union with his body.[46]

5. 2. Transmission of Spiritual Understanding through Middle Ages

As we can see, Jerome could find basis for his understanding of ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον as *supersubstantial bread* in the earlier writings – of Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Marius Victorinus, and his understanding of bread from Mt 6:11 as "bread that is above all substances and surpasses all creatures" (*Comm. In Matt.* 1.6.11) is not something new or anyhow surprising.[47]

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declares himself to be the bread of heaven," and also: "The Church [is] baked bread." According to Brown, the bread of which the Lord's Prayer speaks in understanding of Clement of Alexandria is the reception of the Logos. Anyway, we cannot accept this Brown's interpretation, since it seems that Clement in *Paedagogus* 1.6 does not speak about 'bread petition' of the Lord's Prayer, but rather in general – in terms of Alexandrian theology.

43 Cf. Anthony Meredith, "Patristic Spirituality," in *Companion Encyclopedia of Theology*, eds. Peter Byrne and Leslie Houlden (London – New York: Routledge, 1995), 536–557: 537.

44 Quoted according to Eojin Lee, *Theology of the Open Table* (Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publications – Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), 118. For two translations of Tertullian's *Treatise on prayer* in English, see Tertullian, *Treatises Concerning Prayer and Baptism*, translated by Alexander Souter (London: S. P. C. K., 1919) [this translation by Alexander Souter is also available online at http://www.tertullian.org/articles/souter_orat_bapt/souter_orat_bapt_03prayer.htm, accessed June 3, 2019], and E. Evans, *Tertullian's Tract on the Prayer*, The Latin text with critical notes, an English translation, an introduction, and explanatory observations by Ernest Evans (London: S. P. C. K., 1953) [available online at http://www.tertullian.org/articles/evans_orat/evans_orat_04english.htm, accessed June 3, 2019].

45 Quoted according to Simonetti, *Matthew 1–13*, 135.

46 Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 173.

47 Authors mentioned above are not the only ones who understood the word ἐπιούσιον as the word with spiritual meaning – that word was understood as a such by other Church Fathers as well. Cf. Bernard Orchard, "The Meaning of Ton Epiousion: Mt 6:11 = Lk 11:3," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 3, no. 3 (October 1973), 274–282: 281, https://doi.org/10.1177/014610797300300303.

In the works of John Cassian (c. 360–c. 435), one of John Chrysostom's pupils, we can find a similar understanding. In his interpretation, which we can find in his *Conferences* 9.21 (*Collatio IX. De Oratione* 21 = *PL* 49, 794A–795B), *panem nostrum* ἐπιούσιον is *panem super–substantialem* [= *supersubstantial bread*], and it has a deep and spiritual meaning:

> "The word 'supersubstantial' expresses… a thing above all substances."[48]

Reading of Lord's Prayer petition about bread as spiritual one and as referring to Eucharistic bread was continually transmitted through the writings of later Western and Eastern Fathers. In the West, we can find a meaning of bread of Lord's Prayer as "supersubstantial bread" in understanding of Peter Abelard (1079–1142),[49] or as "sacramental bread" in understanding of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274).[50] This traditional Eucharistic understanding shaped some of the conclusions of Council of Trent (1545–1563),[51] which is 19th Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church,[52] and has influenced Western theology for centuries.[53] In some of the translations of Scripture in the West we can find echoes of the same tradition as well as the influence of Patristic insights. For example, the Vulgate translation of ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον in Mt 6:11 as *panis supersubstantialis* led to "supersubstantial bread" in Douay–Rheims Bible translation, published in 1582.[54] Patristic understandings are transmitted in

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48 Quoted according to Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 174. For English translation of Cassian's *Conferences*, see John Cassian, *Conferences*, trans Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1985).

49 Cf. David Grumett, "Give Us This Day our Supersubstantial Bread," *Studia Liturgica* 36, no. 2 (September 2006), 201–211: 201–202, https://doi.org/10.1177/003932070603600206.

50 For Thomas of Aquinas, 'bread petition' of Lord's Prayer could be interpreted in a number of ways. But, first of all, it refers to Christ – "our sacramental bread" ("panem nostrum sacramentalem", *Expositio in orationem dominicam*, V). For English translation of this explanation, see *The Lord's Prayer by St. Thomas Aquinas*, *the Angelic Doctor*, translated by H. A. Rawes (London: Burns and Oates, 1879), 73. On Aquinas' interpretation of 'bread petition,' see Paul Murray, *Praying with Confidence: Aquinas on the Lord's Prayer* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 69–70.

51 For example, in the 13th session of Council of Trent, held in 1551, *supersubstantial* bread was associated with the Eucharist. For specific use of traditional Eucharistic vocabulary in the Thirteenth Session of the Council of Trent, see *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent*, ed. and trans. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 82.

52 The Council of Trent teaches: "Christ our Lord, really and substantially present in the sacrament of Eucharist, *is pre-eminently this bread*." – cf. *The Catechism of the Council of Trent, Published by Command of Pope Pius the Fifth*, Translated into English by J. Donovan (Baltimore: James Myres, 1833), 485.

53 Approximately one century ago this influence was more evident than today. So, in a papal decree about the Council of Trent, namely in the decree *Sacra Tridentina: On Frequent and Daily Reception of Holy Communion*, issued and approved by Pope Pius X on December 20, 1905, we can read: "We are bidden in the Lord's Prayer to ask for 'our daily bread' by which words, the holy Fathers of the Church all but unanimously teach, must be understood not so much that material bread which is the support of the body as the *Eucharistic bread* which ought to be *our daily food*. Moreover, the desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church that all the faithful should *daily approach the sacred banquet* is directed chiefly…" – quoted according to Juan B. Ferreres, *The Decree on Daily Communion: A Historical Sketch and Commentary*, trans. H. Jimenez (London – Edinburgh: Sands & Co., 1910), 25. The text of this decree is also available online, at website of Eternal Word Television Network, Inc. Irondale, Alabama, accessed June 3, 2019, https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/decree-on-frequent--daily-reception-of-holy-communion-2174.

54 Gordon Campbell, "The Catholic Contribution to the King James Bible," in *The English Bible in the Early Modern World*, St Andrews Studies in Reformation History, Vol. 10, eds. Tadhg Ó Hannracháin and Robert

Western Christian spirituality and theology to present times, so spiritual and Eucharistic understanding of 'bread petition' of Lord's Prayer is still present in contemporary biblical interpretation,[55] and it is preserved in some fundamental doctrinal documents – for example in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in which, in par. 2835 we can read:

> "This petition, with the responsibility it involves, also applies to another hunger from which men are perishing: 'Man does not live by bread alone, but ... by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'... For this reason the specifically Christian sense of this fourth petition concerns the Bread of Life: the Word of God accepted in faith, the Body of Christ received in the Eucharist."[56]

And in par. 2837:

> "'Daily' (*epiousios*) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament... Taken literally (*epi-ousios*: 'super-essential'), it refers directly to the Bread of Life, the Body of Christ... The Eucharist is our daily bread."[57]

More evidently, this tradition of spiritual and mystical understanding of 'bread petition' of Lord's Prayer was especially strong and vivid in the works of Eastern theologians and authors such is Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 313–386),[58] Maxim Confessor (c. 580–662),[59] German of Constantinople (c. 634–733/740),[60] Symeon the New Theologian (949–1022),[61]

Armstrong (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2018), 131–140: 137, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004347977_007.

55 So, for example, in the *New Interpreter's Bible* we can find a few explanations regarding the interpretation of the 'bread' of Lord's Prayer – and firstly there is an eschatological understanding, after which follows daily, this-worldly needs understanding, and then Eucharistic – in sense this 'bread' refers to sacramental, Eucharistic bread – cf. Leander E. Keck, ed., *The New Interpreter's Bible. Volume VIII. General Articles on the New Testament. The Gospel of Matthew. The Gospel of Mark* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 204.

56 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part Four: Christian Prayer. Section Two. The Lord's Prayer. Article 3: The Seven Petitions. IV. "Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread", par. 2835, Libreria Editrice Vaticana / The Holy See, accessed June 3, 2019, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__PAA.HTM.

57 *Ibid.*, par. 2837.

58 In Cyril's *Mystagogic Catecheses*, already quoted above, the 'bread' of Lord's Prayer is understood in the Eucharistic sense. In this work, written around year 348, Cyril says (*Cat. myst.* 5, 15 = *PG* 33, 1120B–C): "'Give us this day our substantial bread.' The ordinary bread we know is not substantial; but this holy bread is substantial in the sense that it is assimilated by the substance of the soul. This bread does not go down into the belly to be discharged into the privy; it is distributed throughout your whole constitution to the benefit of soul as well as body." – quoted from Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 185. Cf. also Meredith, "Patristic Spirituality," 537.

59 Maximus the Confessor, in his *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer*, prefers spiritual interpretation, and says that our 'ἐπιούσιον' [daily / supersubstantial] bread is divine food – cf. *PG* 90, 897A–D; cf. Theodoros Zisis, "The Lord's Prayer Interpreted According to Saint Maximos the Confessor," Orthodox Christianity Information Center, accessed June 3, 2019, http://orthodoxinfo.com/praxis/the-lords-prayer-interpreted-according-ing-to-saint-maximos-the-confessor.aspx.

60 In his *Historia ecclesiastica*, German I of Constantinople clearly states: "The 'supersubstantial bread' [ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ἐπιούσιος] is Christ" (cf. *PG* 98, 444C–D).

61 Unlike other mentioned authors, Symeon does not directly interpret Lord's Prayer, rather he makes an allusion – but his rendering of exact words of Mt 6:11 / Lk 11:3 is interesting: namely, according to Symeon's *Ethical Discourse* 1.6, Church needs to be nourished continually or every day by the *supersubstantial bread* (ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον) – cf. Grumett, "Give Us This Day our Supersubstantial Bread," 210. Moreover, at the same place (*Eth. Disc.* 1. 6. 165–172) Symeon says that the Church *cannot live* 'without being fed every day by the *supersubstan-*

Niketas Stethatos (c. 1005–1090),[62] Theophylactus of Ochrid (c. 1055–1107),[63] …

5. 3. Reception of the Spiritual Understanding of Mt 6:11 in Recent Times

In the more recent times, we can find a spiritual and an Eucharistic understanding of 'bread petition' of Lord's Prayer in the interpretations of Slavic and Greek theologians from 16th–19ᵗʰ century, like, for example Peter Mogila (1596–1647),[64] Macarius of Corinthus (1731–1805),[65] Philaret of Moscow (1782–1867),[66] and others.

More recently, in 20th and 21st century, "Eucharistic interpretation" of the word ἐπιούσιος could be found in the writings of some prominent Orthodox theologians, such as

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tial bread' – which is Eucharist: cf. Hilarion Alfeyev, *St Symeon the New Theologian and Orthodox Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 87–88. In that manner, in Symeon's life and spiritual practice the words "Give us this day our 'daily' bread" (Mt 6:11) were interpreted as an indication of the daily reception of the Eucharist, i. e. as the basis for the idea of daily Communion. "Symeon was a supporter of daily Liturgy and Communion as a general principle… He received Holy Communion every day from the very beginning of his monastic life, and after being ordained he celebrated the Liturgy daily" – in this he simply followed the Studite tradition, and also traditions that already existed before his times, especially in Eastern Orthodox monastic communities – cf. Alfeyev, *St Symeon the New Theologian*, 35, 83–87.

62 For Niketas, 'daily bread' of the Lord's Prayer is none other than the Body of Christ. Cf. John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1979), 204–205.

63 Theophylactus in his *Commentary on Matthew* 6:11 says that the ἄρτος ὁ ἐπιούσιος – 'supersubstantial bread' in Lord's Prayer – is body of Christ (cf. Theophylactus of Ochrid, *Ennaratio in Evangelium Matthaei* 6 = *PG* 123, 205A).

64 In order to explain the meaning of the 'bread petition' of Lord's Prayer, Peter Mogila in his *Catechism* from 1640, answering the Question 19 – *What is contained in this Petition*? – wrote: "In First, that divine and most excellent *Food of our Souls*, the *Word of God*, is here meant… Secondly, herein is included that other *Food of our Souls*, namely, the *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*." In third place, Mogila mentions things which are necessary for this present life – for full explanation cf. Peter Mogila, *The Orthodox Confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Eastern Church*, Edited with Preface by J. J. Overbeck, D.D. and with Introductory Notice by J. N. W. B. Robertson (London: Thomas Baker, 1898), 102–103.

65 For Makarios, the 'bread' of Lord's Prayer we could understand literally, as the "common bread," but more valuable is the understanding of this 'bread' as the "Bread of Word of God" in second place, and the most valuable is the spiritual understanding of this 'bread' as "substantial bread" of Eucharist. For translation of Makarios' interpretation of 'bread petition' of Lord's Prayer in English, cf. George Dion Dragas, *The Lord's Prayer According to Saint Makarios of Corinth* (Rollinsford, New Hampshire: Orthodox Research Institute, 2005), 59–82.

66 Philaret of Moscow in his *Catechism* [from 1823, published in 1830 – as *The Longer Catechism of the Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church*, Examined and Approved by the Most Holy Governing Synod (Moscow: Synodical Press, 1830)] speaks about double meaning of 'bread petition' – firstly he mentions bread of subsistence necessary for life (par. 415–417), and secondly he speaks about the spiritual dimension (par. 418–419), namely about "bread of subsistence for the soul" which is "The Word of God, and the Body and Blood of Christ." Quoted according to Philaret (Drozdov) of Moscow, *The Longer Catechism of The Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church*, in *The Creeds of Christendom, with A History and Critical Notes: Volume II. The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1919), 510–511.

Nikolaj Velimirović,[67] Olivier Clément,[68] George Kapsanis,[69] Thomas Hopko,[70] John D. Zizioulas,[71] Hilarion Alfeyev,[72] and so on. Short summary of this Eucharistic understanding we can find in Schmemann's explanation:

> "... Give us, today, the food which is essential for us. ... This means that the ultimate source of all this for us is God himself... We receive bread, we receive life, but in order that the purpose of this life may be revealed. And the purpose of this life lies in God, in knowledge of him, in love for him, in communion with him, in the joy of his eternity, and in that life which the Gospel calls, 'life in abundance.' (John 10:10)"[73]

More strikingly, colored by heritage of Alexandrine theological tradition, in the comment on Mt 6:11 in the *Orthodox Study Bible* we can find the following explication:

> "*Daily* is a misleading translation of the Greek *epiousios*, which is literally "above the essence," or "supersubstantial." The expression **daily bread** indicates not merely bread for this day, for earthly nourishment; it is the bread for the eternal day of the Kingdom of God, for the nourishment of our immortal soul. This living, supersubstantial bread is Christ Himself. In the Lord's Prayer, then, we are not asking merely for material bread for physical health, but for the spiritual bread of eternal life (Jn 6:27–58)."[74]

Conclusion

Present day Christians usually understand the 'bread' in Lord's Prayer as 'daily bread,' as we can see in a large number of contemporary translations.[75] However, the same term has

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[67] Cf. his Eucharistic explanation of the 'bread petition' of Lord's Prayer in his *Catechism* – for an English translation, see Nikolaj Velimirović, *The Faith of the Saints: A Catechism*, Treasury of Serbian Orthodox Spirituality, Vol. 6 (Libertyville, Ill.: St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Seminary – Bishop Nikolai Resource Center, 2001).

[68] "The bread asked for in the Lord's Prayer in daily anticipation of the last Today (this bread called in the gospel *epiousios*, that is, 'bread of the world to come,' a 'supersubstantial' bread), is very clearly the Eucharist." Quoted from Olivier Clément, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism: Text and Commentary*, translated by Theodore Berkeley and Jeremy Hummerstone (New York: New City Press, 1995), 122.

[69] Regarding the 'bread petition' of Lord's Prayer, Kapsanis wrote: "According to the holy Fathers, with this petition we ask not only for material bread, but *mostly the spiritual Bread*, *Christ*. Christ is offered to us with His word, and with His Body and His Blood. This offering takes place in every Divine Liturgy..." – cf. George Kapsanis, *The Lord's Prayer* (Mount Athos: The Holy Monastery of St. Gregorios, 2001), 33.

[70] Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith*, 112–113.

[71] For his Eucharistic explanation of the 'bread petition' of Lord's Prayer, see Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Communion*, 25–26, 42–43.

[72] "The Christian God is 'the bread of life' (John 6:35), the 'daily bread' (Matt. 6:11), which 'comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world' (John 6:33)." Quoted from Hilarion Alfeyev, *The Mystery of Faith: An Introduction to the Teaching and Spirituality of the Orthodox Church* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002), 190.

[73] Schmemann, *Our Father*, 61.

[74] Quoted from *The Orthodox Study Bible: Ancient Christianity Speaks to Today's World*, prepared under the auspices of the Academic Community of St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology, Elk Grove, California (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 1278.

[75] Nevertheless, there are a few solutions among translations in English language. Four main possible translations are 'daily,' 'future,' 'needful,' and 'tomorrows' – cf. Brown et al., *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 645. There are also additional understandings – as the bread which is 'necessary,' 'continual,' 'for today,' or 'for tomorrow' – cf. Keck, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, 204.

a different meaning in Orthodox understanding,**76** emphasized by Orthodox theologians and Orthodox interpreters of the Bible.

This Orthodox understanding is obvious in Slavic Translations of New Testament, influenced by Orthodox Church, which shows that the Orthodox understanding of the term ἐπιούσιος in Mt 6:11 / Lk 11:3 is spiritual – Eucharistic and eschatological.

In that sense, Orthodox Christians, and among them especially Orthodox Greek and Slavic Christians, keep the early Christian understanding and the traditional sense of the unique word ἐπιούσιον in Mt 6:11 / Lk 11:3 when they recite the Lord's Prayer. So when an Orthodox Christian asks for "daily bread" in Lord's Prayer, she/he mean not just common food, but rather the "Bread from heaven, which giveth life unto the world" (Jn 6:33).

Namely, different medieval and later Christian interpretations of the term ἐπιούσιος determined Slavic translations of this term,**77** as well as other translations which are brought out in Orthodox Church milieu.

On the other side, in terms of Western Christianity, the Latin transliteration of the word ἐπιούσιος, introduced by Jerome, is "supersubstantial" bread. In this traditional understanding, based on the teachings of early Church Fathers, the aim of prayer is spiritual bread, or Eucharistic bread. According to this understanding, Jesus Christ himself is the Bread of life – Christ is the spiritual bread of eternal life, which is available to faithful in Eucharist. This understanding of 'bread petition' of Lord's Prayer is present in teaching of Catholic Church and presented in the *Catechism* of Catholic Church.

The Eastern Orthodox Christians believe that they partake of this Bread in the Mystical Supper during every Eucharist, and they express this belief by reciting Lord's Prayer during every Eucharistic Liturgy, immediately before Communion.

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76 There are many different translations of Greek "ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον." Throughout the history there were different solutions for translating a strange Greek word ἐπιούσιος in the Lord's Prayer, so there are translations of petition for bread which is 'continual', 'necessary' or 'abundant' in Syriac versions, or 'coming' in Coptic, 'of tomorrow' in Gospel of Hebrews (cf. Lowe, *The Lord's Prayer*, 35; cf. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 591–592; for more detailed accounts of different translations, cf. Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 398–399; cf. also Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, 321), *cotidianum* / 'daily' or *supersubstantialem* / 'supersubstantial' in Latin translations, 'daily' in Gothic, 'supersubstantial' in Slavic... As we can see from examples quoted above in this paper, from the times of early Christendom and through the Middle Ages, both in the translations of the New Testament and in the interpretations of Christian writers, this word is often translated and interpreted in its spiritual meaning, as "supersubstantial" or the like, and the phrase itself has either a dual, or sometimes has an even purely mystical/spiritual meaning. This meaning is present especially in tradition of the Orthodox Church.

77 In Old Slavic translations, from the 9th century, i.e. from the times of the first translations of Bible into Slavic language, 'supersubstantial' was the only rendering of Greek word ἐπιούσιον [Old Slavonic NASÍ ¤·NᵌLJ, Church Slavonic naȢ§nᵒj], with just a single one recorded excerption (namely, in *Codex Marianus*, an Slavic Glagolitic Gospel Book dated to the beginning of the 11th century, in which ἐπιούσιον in Mt 6:11 is translated as "ⰾⰵⰱⰰ ⱀⰰⱎⱏ ⱀⰰⱄⱅⰰⰲⰵⱎⰰⰰⰳⱁ ⰴⱐⱀⰵ" / "хлѣбъ нашъ наставъшааго дьне" – "the bread for the following day / tommorow" – cf. "Codex Marianus," in *Corpus Cyrillo-Methodianum Helsingiense: An Electronic Corpus of Old Church Slavonic Texts*, ed. Jouko Lindstedt et al. (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 1986–2019), http://www.helsinki.fi/slaavilaiset/ccmh/MAR.TXT, accessed June 3, 2019, line 1061100). Among the Eastern Orthodox Slavs naȢ§nᵒj / 'supersubstantial' is the usual translation even today [Russian насущный, Belorussian насу́шчны, Bulgarian насъщния, Macedonian насушен, Serbian насушни]. For Western Slavs, which were more connected to Western civilization since the end of Middle Ages, the word 'supersubstantial' was suppressed by the word 'daily' in Mt 6:11 / Lk 11:3 in translations of biblical texts.

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In our paper we searched for the origins of contemporary unusual and uncommon Orthodox Christian understandings, and pointed out the reasons – theological, liturgical and historical – for spiritual understanding of this term among Orthodox Christians.

Additionally, as our research is coming to conclusion, a new questions arises: can different approaches to interpretation of biblical text affect contemporary Christian life and practice? For example, can an Orthodox Eucharistic and eschatological understanding lead to some "Orthodox eschatological utopism"? On the other hand, may contemporary understanding of 'bread' as 'daily' lead to a simple "evangelical activism," without the eschatological meaning and without the eschatological basis? And what is the Ecumenical consequence of these different understandings?

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Patristic Anthropology and the Modern World

Introduction

It is a great pleasure and a privilege for me to be invited to give this first of a series of lectures devoted to the blessed memory of the late Father Georges Florovsky, the great Orthodox theologian and patristic scholar of the twentieth century, under whose guidance I had the great blessing to be initiated myself into patristic thought during my academic studies.[*] May Our Lord grant him eternal memory and a place among His saints in His Kingdom! All those who owe their acquaintance with Orthodox and patristic theology to the writings and teaching of this great theologian cannot but feel deeply grateful to the renowned University of Notre Dame and its Tantur Ecumenical Institute for their initiative to organize the present series of conferences in honor of this leading scholar and ecumenical pioneer. This will strengthen further the relations between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches and deepen the *rapprochement* between the Eastern and the Western Christian traditions at a time when the problems facing humanity require urgently a common Christian witness and an effort to make it relevant and meaningful to the existential needs and concerns of our time.

It has been said that whereas the twentieth century has been devoted by Christian theology chiefly to ecclesiology, the present one will be the century of anthropology. This is, of course, an oversimplification, but it is by no means an exaggeration. The somewhat introspective preoccupation of the ecumenical movement in the previous century, justified as it was by the need to clarify the self-consciousness of the divided Christians in their ecumenical encounter, is now forced to give space and priority to the burning issues humanity is faced with in our time, all of which seem to be centered on humanity's place and responsibility in the world, The advances of science and technology and the bio-ethical issues they entail, the continuing conflicts between individual and collective interests, the dramatic crisis concerning human identity itself, and, perhaps, the most serious crisis of all concerning humanity's relation to its natural environment—all of these call for an urgent and deep reflection on the question of humanity's identity and its role and responsibility in the world today. Christians are now called to unite not simply between themselves, but

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vis-a-vis these contemporary problems. Anthropology becomes, thus, the central focus of ecumenism in our time.

   This situation challenges also patristic theology to reflect on its own role and responsibility today. Patristic studies have been treated traditionally as a *historical* subject. Under the impact of the 18ᵗʰ century historicism the study of the fathers has aimed at the restoration of patristic thought as it was in its own time. Any introduction of later or modem ideas and concerns into patristic research would tend to be charged with "anachronism" and "bad patristic scholarship." In addition to that, the slogan "back to the Fathers" which appeared in Anglican circles in the 19ᵗʰ century was greeted with enthusiasm, particularly by conservative Orthodox circles, leading to a kind of "patristic fundamentalism," which considers as a contamination of patristic tradition any introduction of modem ideas and terminology into the exposition and presentation of patristic thought.

   This understanding of patristic scholarship which is still advocated even by eminent specialists in the field, is strongly opposed by the theologian to whom these lectures are devoted, namely Father Georges Florovsky. What he had to say on this matter is worth recalling. Knowledge of the Fathers, he writes,

> "cannot be achieved by any servile repetition of the Patristic letter, as it cannot be achieved by Biblical fundamentalism either... servility is alien both to the Bible and to the Fathers. They were themselves bold and courageous and adventurous seekers of the Divine truth...No renewal is possible without a return to the sources. But it must be a return to the sources, the Well of living water, and not simply a retirement into a library or museum of venerable and respectable, but outlived relics."

This calls for the need to *interpret* patristic thought, i.e. to apply to patristic scholarship what is today called *hermeneutics*. The historicist approach which denies any use of modem ideas in dealing with the texts of the past has been strongly 2 challenged in our time as a false approach to tradition. As Hans-Georg Gadamer, the eminent German philosopher of last century, has aptly demonstrated, we can never truly know a work of the past unless we bring it within the "horizon" of our own concerns and put to it our own questions. Any such hermeneutic would entail the fusion of the horizon of the past with the horizon of the present, of our own existential concerns and questions.

   It is only by applying this method that we can arrive at the relevance of patristic anthropology, which is the aim of the present lecture. The fathers developed their anthropology in response to the challenges of their time. If their views are to have a relevance for our time they must be placed in relation to our own contemporary questions. It is only in this way that they will avoid being turned into a "venerable relic," to use Fr. Florovsky's illustration, and become a "well of living water" from which we may quench our thirst.

   Our task in the present lecture will be to raise certain questions concerning anthropology to the fathers of the Church with a view to obtaining answers to today's problems on this subject: how would patristic anthropology respond to the way the modern world, particularly as it has been formed by Western culture, understands and treats the human being? Obviously, we can only deal with the relevant issues of this vast subject selectively and in a very general way, owing to the limited time at our disposal. But it is hoped that the

issues we shall raise and discuss, albeit probably in an academically inexhaustive way, will offer some indications of the message patristic thought may bring to our situation today.

Defining Humanity in Patristic Thought

"What is man that Thou art mindful of him?", the psalmist asks God (Ps. 8,4), a question repeated by the author of the Letter to Hebrews (2, 6). How can the human being be defined?

There are two ways of defining anything, i.e. of establishing its identity. One is by isolating it, describing its qualities and contrasting it with the rest of existing things. This approach was favoured and applied by Aristotle who based his epistemology on the τόδε τι, this "particular something," which should be the starting point of our observation with the view to establishing its substance (οὐσία), its qualities etc.

The other way of identifying something is by *relating* it with other things and establishing its identity through its relationships. This approach tends to be more and more the dominant one in today's science, particularly since Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum physics. According to this approach there is nothing that can be defined in itself, as an isolated individual, since the world we live in is an entangled universe in which everything depends on something else: identities are not *in-stituted* but *con-stituted*.

Now, it is a striking characteristic of patristic anthropology that in defining the human being it always places it in relation to non-human entities. Thus, St. Gregory the theologian describes the human being as

> "an animal composed of both an invisible and a visible nature...a sort of second creation, great in its smallness...earthly and heavenly, ephemeral and immortal...an animal dwelling here and moving elsewhere... and, by disposition towards God, deified (θεούμενον)."

According to St. Gregory, therefore, we cannot identify the human being unless we relate it simultaneously to the animal world and to God. Any isolation of humanity from the rest of the animals (and by extension from the rest of material creation) and God would amount to a distortion, and eventually a loss of its identity.

This relational identification of humanity is applied by the fathers also when they approach humanity as a particular nature, distinct from other "natures." Following Aristotle and the prevailing philosophical language of their time, the fathers would identify things by speaking of their "nature" (φύσις) or "substance" (οὐσία). This term was used in order to indicate the boundaries of an existing thing, beyond which its specific identity is lost. No confusion of natures is ontologically permissible. It is commonplace in patristic anthropology to speak of "human nature" as totally other than divine nature or the nature of animals. But even in referring to humanity as a "nature" the fathers would hasten to introduce a relational character to it: humanity *possesses* in its nature qualities belonging by nature both to God (such as self-mastery (αὐτεξούσιον), reason (λόγος) etc.), and to the irrational animals, (materiality etc.). Humanity's nature is simultaneously capable of being God and animal. Human nature is, thus, other than God and the animals, while being *united* with both of them in an unbreakable relationship.

This relationality is applied by the fathers also when they refer to the constitution of humanity, i.e. when they "analyze" the human being into its component s. It is well known

that some of the fathers speak of humanity as possessing a bipartite composition (body and soul), while others prefer a tripartite one (body, soul and spirit). In both cases a link with God and with animalhood is maintained: in the first case the body links humanity with the animals and the soul with God, and in the second case it is the body and the soul that relate humanity to the animals, while the Spirit links it with God (e.g. St. Irenaeus).

The same interdependence applies also to the relation between the body and the soul of the human being. In the words of Athenagoras of Athens of the 2nd century A.D., "God gave independent being and life neither to the nature of the soul itself, nor to the nature of the body separately, but rather to men, composed of soul and body." As Fr. Florovsky comments, "there would no longer be a man, if the completeness of this structure would be broken," for, as he writes, elsewhere, "a body without a soul is a corpse, and a soul without a body a ghost." Even when the fathers speak of the survival of the human soul after death, they do so with the view to the resurrection of the body which will give again complete identity to the human being. As Athenagoras again writes, "if there is no resurrection human nature is no longer human." Following this relational approach to the human being patristic anthropology can be properly understood if it is placed in the following perspectives.

1. The theological perspective

This was expressed in the patristic period through the idea of the human being as the "image of God." According to the story of the book of Genesis (I, 26), God created the human being "in our image and likeness," an idea widely used by the fathers with a variety of meanings (St. Epiphanius of Salamis in the 4ᵗʰ century lists 25 such meanings of the term). All of these meanings come down to the same 5 principle: anthropology must be placed in theological perspective; humanity outside its relation with God loses or distorts its identity.

2. The social perspective

The relational character of patristic anthropology entails the understanding of humanity not only in its relations to God, but also in the relation between the human beings themselves. This derives directly on the one hand from the *imago Dei* idea, and on the other hand from *the unity of human nature*. We find this twofold relationship stressed particularly by St. Maximus the Confessor, who sees in the human nature adumbrations of God's Trinitarian Life, an *imago Trinitatis* as L. Thunberg puts it, and regards the division between human beings as a threat to human nature itself. This makes this father consider *love* to be the highest form of the expression of the unity of human nature, while its opposite, *self-love* (φιλαυτία) disintegrates it. Any separation therefore, of a human being from its fellow humans accounts to the loss or distortion of its human identity.

3. The cosmological perspective

The relational character of humanity extends to all of the material nature: to the rest of the animals, in the first place and to created universe as a whole. We have seen that St. Gregory Nazianzen does not hesitate to call the human being an "animal" as St. Irenaeus did before him and other fathers did as well. The humanity's relationship with the animal world

is connected with the idea of "divine image," particularly in the Antiochene patristic tradition (St. John Chrysostorn, Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodoret of Cyrus and others), who see the "divine image" in humanity's dominion over the animals and the care for them, while in another tradition, represented mainly by St. Maximus the Confessor, humanity is related to the entire cosmos, as a "microcosm" which sums up all creation in itself. In an impressively profound vision this father relates humanity to the function of transcending and healing in itself the divisions between created and uncreated being, heaven and earth, intelligent and sensible nature, male and female etc., i.e. the role of *mediator* between creation and its Creator, the locus of union between God and the world.

The realization of this mission places on humanity an immense responsibility which could be undertaken only with its consent. *Freedom*, thus emerges as a *sine qua non* condition of being human, which patristic anthropology attaches to the "divine image" (Gregory of Nyssa) or to human nature itself. It was originally meant to serve a positive purpose, that of relating creation to God through humanity, and not a negative one, as "freedom of choice," which emerged as a result of the refusal to fulfill this mission (the Fall).

4. The eschatological perspective

The Maximinian vision of humanity as the "microcosm" and the "mediator" with a call to unite creation with God implies that the human being was given by God a *mission* to fulfill; its existence is tied up with a *purpose* (σκοπός). This places humanity in a dynamic process, i.e. in the course of *time*, and makes it thereby a *historical* being. In this respect St. Maximus recovers the anthropology of St. Ireaneus according to which Adam was created by God as a child in order to grow and mature in time and be finally deified. Time and history are, therefore, constitutive elements of being human, since they are the necessary conditions for the fulfillment of the purpose and. therefore, the *meaning* of human existence.

The association of humanity's history with a *call*, a *mission*, a *purpose*, and an *end* (τέλος), makes anthropology acquire an *eschatological* dimension. It is the end (purpose) that gives meaning to human existence. The meaning of being human derives from the end, the purpose for which humanity was created. And since this end is the unity of humanity and through it of creation with God, being human means acquiring "similitude to God" (κατ᾽ ὁμοίωσιν), *deification*.

Patristic anthropology acquires in this way a *maximalistic* character. Is the modem world prepared to accept this? It is worth looking at this matter closely in a later stage.

5. The Christological perspective

The idea that we are not truly human until we find our "rest" (to use a term particularly favorite to St. Maximus) in God, united with Him and sharing His life, may sound like a fantastic theory until it is put in the perspective of *Christology*. The fathers, and St. Maximus in particular, draw their anthropology of theosis from Christology. The human being which is fully united with God is *Christ*, precisely because in him the deification of humanity is realized. All the anthropological perspectives to which we have referred converge in Christology: the human being is defined through its relation with God, with other human

beings and with the rest of creation as a historical reality in which the end for which humanity was created is realized. Patristic anthropology coincides ultimately with Christology. Christ reveals in himself what it means to be human.

6. The existential perspective

This maximalistic anthropology which raises humanity to the highest level in the entire creation even to divine status, appears to contradict the human being as we know and experience it in our life. The fathers did not ignore or neglect this empirical humanity which is contaminated by sin, decay, suffering and mortality. But, although this kind of humanity appears to be the real one, the fathers would regard it as a distortion of true human identity. The actual humanity of our experience is sick and needs to be cured and raised to the state in which God intended it to be in creating it. A great part of patristic anthropology, particularly that of the ascetic spiritual fathers, is dedicated to the restoration of humanity to its true nature. This restoration, however, presupposes a clear knowledge of what true humanity is and of what has actually gone wrong in human existence causing the present state of sin, decay and mortality.

If we define the fall as the claim of the human being to be God, i.e. the ultimate point of reference in creation. Adam's disobedience appears to be not a moral problem but an ontological one. This seems to have been the view of the Greek fathers in particular, who saw in death not a punishment for disobedience but a wound inflicted on our nature, a disease owing to the collapse of our bond with God and creation. The fall is, in the final analysis, nothing else but the breaking down and disintegration of the relational structure of human identity.

Identifying the Human Being in the Modern World

The understanding of the human being in our modern world has been formed by a variety of factors and intellectual trends. The following stand out as having affected the formation of modern anthropology in a decisive way:

1. The rise and influence of rationalism

The understanding of the human being as a "rational animal" (ζῶον λογικόν) did not appear for the first time in the modern era. It was used by Aristotle in classical Greece and continued to be a key notion in the patristic period and in medieval thought. In all of these cases λόγος reason was used in order to indicate a *link* between the human being, God and creation: the human being possesses through its reason the capacity to relate to God and the rest of the world, the function of its λόγος being relational and unitive, as the sanskritic root (*leg*) of the word would indicate. Thus, for the ancient Greeks λόγος was always ξυνὸς (=common), the faculty of the human being to bring the "many" into "one" (in the cosmos as well as in the state-πόλις), and for the Greek fathers the link between creation, humanity and God (the λόγοι of creation united in the Λόγος of God—St. Maximus the Confessor). The medieval scholastics, too, maintained this relational character of reason by placing it in the broader context of the notion of Being.

This relational and unitive function of reason seems to have been lost in modern times. Already for the most prominent thinkers of the Enlightenment reason is identified with the *cognitive judgment* of the human being, its capacity to distinguish between true and false (Descartes) or to calculate (Hobbes), or to recognize the causes of things and their effects, "to reason" (Locke) etc. This association of reason with the intellect's capacity to argue "logically" seems to have established itself as the prevailing, if not the exclusive, one in our language. Now, this understanding of reason as the function of "cognitive judgment" has had dramatic consequences for what we have called "relational" definition of the human being. Both our relation with God and with the rest of creation has to pass through this cognitive judgment of human reason in order to be acceptable. Kant would permit religion to function "only within the bounds of reason," and Christian theology would succumb to the challenge by trying to produce rational arguments for God's existence (Apologetics), or appeal to the natural sciences for support as in the case of Newtonian physics. The same sovereignty of human reason was also to dominate our relationship with nature. Francis Bacon would call the human being to treat nature as its "slave" and Descartes advised us to become "maitres et possesseurs de la nature," while Kant would invite us to be the "judges" of nature bringing it before the tribunal of human reason. Our modern world has followed their advice and the cost is now paid by it with the current ecological crisis.

2. The rise of psychology

The understanding of the human being as possessing a *soul* which distinguishes it from the animals is encountered repeatedly in the fathers. As we have noted in the previous section, although it was common among them to speak of the immortality of the soul, we must be cautious not to identify their view with that of Plato, since their faith in the resurrection of the body would make it impossible for them, to conceive of the human being as identical with its soul. A tendency towards Platonism was, of course, always present, particularly in the Origenist tradition, but, as the hesychastic monasticism of the 14th century has shown, our relationship with God, also though prayer, would have to pass through *the body too*.

The introspective search of the human soul as a means of relating with God was not present among the Greek Fathers. It was to be found for the first time (?) in St. Augustine with his *Confessions*, in order to reach into modem times, including our own days. While for St. Augustine this inwardness was complemented with a very strong and deep theology of communion and relationality, in the modem times it acquired a strongly individualistic character which has led to a detachment of the human being both from God and from the rest of human beings, not to speak of the material creation. Thus, from the sovereignty of reason we have been led to that of *conscience*: the human being is distinguished from the rest of beings for its conscience which becomes in this way the *judge* of what is right and what is wrong an idea which has brought us to the labyrinth of modem views of morality, brought out and discussed so lucidly in Alastair Macintyre's *After Virtue*. Conscience has taken in this way the place both of God and our fellow human beings and tends to define being human itself.

This introspectiveness of the human being has reached its peak with modern *Psychoanalysis*. The idea of conscience was supplemented with that of *self-consciousness* and

that in turn was replaced by the emergence of a science dealing with the investigation of the depths of the human soul, into the unconscious. in order to explain specific forms of behavior and cure conditions causing distress and illnesses. Without any intention to minimize or undervalue the importance of this science I cannot but note its association with the contribution to an anthropology centered on the *ego*. This does not rule out relationality in the understanding of the human being, for it is through the investigation of one's relations that the ego is formed and constituted. And yet the point remains that in this instance too, as in the case of rationalism, it is the human being itself that constitutes the axis of its identity.

3. The domination of technology

There is probably nothing more characteristic of our modern world than the domination of technology. This domination is so powerful and widespread that the human being tends to be dependent on it in almost every aspect of its life. This dependence, which in certain cases amounts to addiction, will probably become—if things continue the present course—an aspect of human identity itself.

The roots of modern technology are to be found in the rise of rationalism to which we referred above. The understanding of human reason in terms of its ability to observe the world by establishing causes and effects, calculating, measuring etc. has led the human being to treat nature as something to be counted, measured and mapped, and finally predicted, controlled, intelligible and useful.

This means that the patristic view of creation as drawing its intelligibility from a teleology deriving from its relation with God and humanity would no longer affect anthropology. As it has been observed by Max Weber, in modern societies, sublime, ultimate values withdraw from public life into the private sphere leaving public life to be organized around notions of instrumental rationality and bureaucratic efficacy. The human being is intervening brutally into the laws of nature extracting from it energy and other qualities to be stored and used for purposes other than the ones indented by nature itself (it is this that differentiates modem technology from the earlier one, according to Heidegger), and even altering its basic laws, as it tends to happen with biotechnology in our days.

When we come to digital technology which now constitutes an inseparable component of our lives the relationship of the human being with the material world vanishes almost entirely. This kind of technology is based on the "dematerialization" of matter, making even our bodies redundant in communication. Human relationships occur on the internet, many people claim to have thousands of "friends" through the Facebook without ever having shaken hands with them, and all this while the world is preparing itself to welcome in its life the artificial intelligent beings, some of which (or of whom?) have already arrived. Is this the end of the *homo sapiens* the human being as we have known it? Some thinkers, like Harari, seem to think so. It certainly looks like the end of the human being as the fathers knew it.

Towards a Hermeneutic of Patristic Anthropology

In view of these developments the question arises whether patristic anthropology can have any relevance in our time. Certainly, the language in which this anthropology was cast need not be employed today except by patristic scholars whose task is to find out and establish the way the fathers expressed their faith in their own time. This would apply not only to terminology but also to the *concepts* the lathers used in their anthropology. It is known that the fathers, precisely in their effort to apply a hermeneutical approach to the Bible and to the tradition they had received, borrowed from the sciences and philosophies of their time anthropological concepts and ideas which modem sciences would not find appropriate in order to express their anthropology. The concept of "soul," for example, which was borrowed by the fathers from the (basically platonic) anthropology of their time in order to interpret the biblical *nephesh*/ψυχή, may be rendered today with another term, more consonant with the current scientific views, without losing the meaning it was indented to express in its biblical and patristic use.

Now, in order to "transfer" something from the past and make it relevant for the present (which is the task of *hermeneutics*) it would not be sufficient to replace old terms or concepts with contemporary ones (which would be the work of *exegesis*). What is needed in hermeneutics is placing the past and the present in a common conceptual context (or *horizon*) which will make the past relevant, in the double sense of *intelligible and existentially meaningful.*

As we have seen in our presentation of patristic anthropology here, according to the fathers the human being is properly defined only through its relations: *you are not truly human unless or until you relate with God, your fellow human beings and the rest of the material creation.* These relations are *constitutive* of being human. One is free to choose not to relate in this way, but this would amount to choosing not to be human in the proper sense of the word.

This is not how the human being is defined in the modem world. Here, the human being comes first, and its relations with God, the other human beings and creation follow as *free choices* of the individual. God, the other and anything nonhuman can even be a threat to human identity (remember Sartre's "the other is my hell"). Being human means being free even not to relate with anyone or to relate only with the ones you choose. Religion, thus, becomes a *private affair* in modem societies, and this in the name of *human rights.* The same applies to the relations with other human beings: it is a manifestation of being truly human if you are free to establish or dissolve your relationships whether in marriage or in friendship or in any other form of social life. This amounts to identifying being human with being a *free individual.*

This contrast between patristic and modem anthropology concerning the role of relationality in the understanding of the human being acquires particular existential significance in our time. Few cases may be used as illustrations.

a) *The bioethical problems* of our time have to do with the way the human being is approached and understood. In most, if not in all, cases the bio-ethical problems result from

a neglect of the relational nature of the human being. Every success in scientific progress seems to profit one human being at the expense of other human beings or of human nature as a whole, on which the existence of the human being itself depends. Bio-medical technology, for example, seems to treat the human being in total isolation from its relations, as if it were simply an individual bio-physical object. The possibility of transferring bits of human genes into laboratory animals, which is already practiced by scientists, makes it possible to cure human diseases by an intervention into animal nature, but it may make it possible also to alter the human nature by applying the same method in the reverse direction. Unless the human being bears constantly in mind that its own nature can exist as human only in relation with non-human natures it may end up with a loss of human nature itself. The principle of relationality can serve as a criterion in bio-ethic al questions, so that scientific progress may enhance and not damage human identity.

b) The notion of relationality is particularly important in facing the *social* problems of our time. The conception of human being as an individual has been questioned in modem times, not only in theology and philosophy but also in social sciences, and yet the problem of the relation of the individual to society continues to be present: how can the interests of the individual be reconciled with those of society? If the human being is free in choosing (or rejecting) its relations, is it not free to reject the interests of others, if they conflict with its own? The problem seems to have been solved in modem societies in a way that kept the idea of the individual intact: one is free to do anything provided that the freedom of the others is respected, which means that the individual continues to be individual even in relating with other individuals. The rights of the human being are nothing else but the rights of the individual.

In order to provide a justification for this, modem democratic constitutional theories have appealed to the principle of *natural law*: every individual has the right to be free because it possesses the same human nature. *Natural law* becomes, thus, the basis of reconciling the individual with society. On this basis the individuals are called to agree freely among themselves through a *social contract* (Hobbes), by which "a war of all men against all men" is avoided. The motive is clearly the instinct of self-preservation which is recognized by human reason.

As the political history of modem times aptly demonstrate s, the relation between the individual and society has never ceased to be problematic. Is it the individual that constitutes society, or is it rather society that grants freedom to the individual, as Marxism would claim? The repeated social upheavals and revolutions in modem societies confirm the continuous existence of the problem created by individualism.

The first blow on individualism was dealt in modem times, albeit mainly on the level of philosophy, by modem *personalism*. This came originally from Neothomism, represented by J. Maritain and others in the early part of the 20th century, in an attempt to present thomist ontology as relational. A clear contrast was then suggested between individual and *person* the former being an arithmetical category relating to quantity, while the latter possessing a quality that transcends the laws of arithmetic, and cannot be added and used for any purpose, being itself the highest form of being, as Thomas Aquinas had already stated.

This view was shared also by the Russian philosopher N. Berdyaev at the same time, but its full development came from the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber and the distinction he made between what he called an *I-Thou* and an *I-It* relationship. According to Buber the structure of human existence is *dialogical* and consists of two distinct kinds of relating. The first one is when the Other is given to me but is not "bound" by me and cannot be appropriated and experienced. In the second case the Other is treated as an object which the *I* as a center of consciousness, a "subject," describes, experiences, arranges and appropriates.

The significance of this approach to the understanding of the human being lies, on the one hand, in its criticism of individualism, and on the other hand, in the support it offers to the view that the human being is *constituted* by its relations, it *emerges* from them. It is this latter that can serve as a bridge between patristic anthropology and the modern world, an alternative to individualism. There is of course a difference in certain basic respects between the relational anthropology as presented by Buber and that of the fathers, particularly in the depreciation the latter may lead to of the relation of the human being to the material creation (the "it" in Buber's structure). This remains one of the basic difficulties in accommodating modern personalism into patristic anthropology, namely that the relational structure of personalist anthropology, not only in Buber but in modern personalist thought in general, limits the scope to intra-human relations and leaves out humanity's relation with creation, an important aspect of the patristic understanding of human identity. Nevertheless, personalism continues to be a crucial point of contact, a "hermeneutical horizon," in relating patristic anthropology to the modern world. This would apply particularly to modern philosophical thought and social theory, other aspects of modern life, especially in the domain of politics, the economy, etc, remaining in fact under the domination of individualism.

c) The relation of patristic anthropology to modern science is another area to be considered. Two sciences are particularly relevant in dealing with anthropology. The first one is obviously *biology*. In terms of the patristic definition of the human being one of the foundational relations that make up humanity is its link with the animal world. The fathers, as we saw, do not hesitate to call the human being an animal. Biological sciences today, since their full adoption of the idea of evolution proposed originally by Darwin, treat the human being as a product of evolution, i.e. as an animal. This has provoked strong reactions on the part of the Church and Christian theologians who regard humanity as a spiritual reality standing above the material cosmos. But it is precisely this view of humanity as essentially a "spiritual" being who *has*, rather than *is,* a body, that would not fit into the relational definition of the human being by the fathers. From this point of view contemporary biology's approach to humanity as being *ontologically* related to the animals can serve as a point of contact with, rather than an offence to, patristic anthropology. For this approach of contemporary biology would be closer to the patristic view than the Enlightenment one which subjects nature to the rational might of the human being. In the patristic tradition, particularly in the desert fathers, the attitude we encounter to the animals is one of respect and affectionate care, not of contemptuous superiority.

The question of humanity's relation to the animals acquires existential significance in the ecological crisis we are facing today. Many species are facing extinction owing to the

way the human being treats the natural environment. It is more than ever before impera-
tive to stress the ontological link between the human being and the rest of the material na-
ture, beginning with the animal world, as I fear we are going to be reminded of that by the
catastrophic consequences of human arrogance.

The other modern science which must be considered is that which deals with the
physical reality. Here, recent developments show two important things for our subject. The
first is that the relational approach we noticed in patristic anthropology is now recognized
by science as being the only proper one also in the scientific exploration of the physical re-
ality: nothing can be conceived in itself. Concepts of atomism and mechanism arc unable
to explain physical reality. "The history of twentieth-century physics, John Polkinghorne
writes, can be read as the story of the discovery of many levels of intrinsic relationality pres-
ent in the structure of the universe." Distinguished physicists explain and analyze this in a
volume bearing the provocative title *The Trinity and an Entangled World: Relationality in
Physical Science and Theology*, 2010. This volume was the result of a meeting between phys-
icists and theologians in the Academy of Athens, which tried to establish links between
theology and science through the concept of *relational ontology*. The outcome of this first
effort of its kind revealed that relationality can (or must) be the "horizon" in which theol-
ogy and science can become relevant to each other provided that they apply this principle
in their own disciplines.

An understanding, therefore, of patristic anthropology in terms of relationality
would not only, as I think, do justice to patristic thought itself, but could also serve as a
hermeneutical "horizon" in which it can be placed and transmitted to the modem world.
This, it must be noted. cannot be feasible with regard to all areas of our culture. The politi-
cal and economic realms are still dominated by atomistic and mechanistic outlooks, and so
are other areas of life, not excluding, alas, the religious one. Individualism is still alive and
well in our modem world.

The other interesting development in modem physics, which bears directly on our
subject, has to do with the relation of the physical universe to the human being. The cos-
mological perspective in which patristic anthropology placed the human being seems to
be confirmed by modem physics, albeit still in the form of theory under discussion. 1 am
referring to what has been called *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, which is the title of
a major study by the physicists John Barrow and Frank Tipler, 1986. Although the model
proposed by the authors has been strongly debated by scientists, certain underlying ideas
in their proposition can be of significance to Christian anthropology. It is important, in
particular, that the human being is shown to be crucial for the life of the universe: "it is
not only that man is adapted to the universe. The universe is adapted to man... According
to this principle, a life giving factor lies at the center of the whole machinery and design
of the world." Such a view of the universe would be basically consonant with patristic cos-
mology and anthropology. We have already noted that at least in the thought of St. Max-
imus the Confessor, creation was designed already from the beginning so that the human
being might arrive to incorporate it in itself and lead it finally to communion with God. It
would be outside the scope of this lecture to be involved in the scientific debate concerning

this subject. Looking, however. at it from the viewpoint of patristic thought we cannot but welcome ideas of physical science which place anthropology in a cosmological perspective as did the fathers, and show the ontological link between humanity and the cosmos. Once again, the relational character of human identity is shown to be of crucial importance in any dialogue between patristic anthropology and modem thought.

Conclusion

I have submitted to your consideration some personal reflections on a subject which would require volumes to receive a proper and satisfactory treatment. It has been, unfortunately. inevitable to leave out of consideration important realms of human life, such as art and culture, for which patristic anthropology could have particular relevance in our time. This should be the object of another effort. My object in this presentation has been to raise the question of human identity, the way the human being is understood, in patristic thought compared with our understanding of it in a world shaped by the ideas and values of what we call "modernity." Needless to say that large parts of the world today, such as Africa. Asia and the Middle East, have formed their views of humanity under the influence of different values and ideas. And yet, in many fundamental ways these people, too, share with us the same view of humanity, having adopted the consequences of western modernity's anthropology in the form of technology, economics etc. In this sense, what has been said here about modern anthropology may apply to them, too.

What is man that God is mindful of him?

In patristic anthropology the human being is regarded as an animal and at the same time as the "image of God:" It is conceived as a "microcosm" comprising in itself the whole cosmos with a mission to unite it finally with God. It is a being that does not fulfill itself until it is deified. Being human means being related to God, to the other human beings and to rest of creation.

These relations are *constitutive* of human identity: the human being does not first exist as human and then relates; it is human only in and through relating—if any of its constitutive relations breaks down human identity itself collapses. An individualistic conception of humanity is not only theoretically wrong; it is existentially catastrophic for human identity.

This view of humanity has undergone a radical revision in the modem era. The rise of rationalism in the Enlightenment led to the discovery of the power of human reason, while the great achievements of science continue, to confirm this power steadily up to our own time. The human being does not need today any relation with extra human beings, be it God or nature, being capable to master itself and eventually everything else.

This self-sufficiency of humanity affected decisively also the understanding of human *freedom*. In a relational definition of the human being the "other", be it God or nature or a fellow being, does not threaten humanity's identity, since it grants it by constituting it in and through a common relation. Thus relation with God, according to the fathers, enhances human identity by elevating it even to the status of deification, and the same is true in a relationship of love between persons, or in the use of nature: freedom becomes in this

way a positive one-way movement, as St. Maximus, for example conceives it, not a freedom of *choice*. When, however, the human being is not defined by its relations but as an autonomous entity, one's relations with the "other" become a matter of free choice: the "other" can be either accepted or rejected in the name of freedom; it can be seen as "my hell" in a Sartrian manner or it can be accepted and related to it only for as long as one wishes. This anthropological principle underlies all areas of human life in our modern (western) world.

Now, how can patristic anthropology be relevant when such an understanding of human being prevails? Can a relational definition of humanity make any sense in such a context? Is a "hermeneutic" of patristic anthropology possible in the modem world? The answer is "yes," and this for the following reasons.

In the first place, it is becoming more and more evident that the understanding of the human being as an autonomous entity that can exist independently of its relations is bringing the modem world to the threshold of self-destruction. This is shown today in a dramatic way by the *ecological crisis* of our time. This crisis is making it clear that the human being depends ontologically on its relation with God, the other human beings and nature; it is *constituted* by them, as patristic anthropology claims. The ecological crisis is due to the understanding of the human being as the lord of creation and its proprietor, and thus to a rejection of our relation with God; to the treatment of nature as a "slave" who meets humanity's selfish interests, i.e. is a denial of humanity's relation with the rest of creation; and, as Pope Francis in his historic encyclical *Laudatio Si* has shown, the serious social implications which this crisis entails imply also a breaking of the relation between the human beings themselves. The relational definition of humanity appears to be imperative today.

Any attempt to make relevant this relational anthropology today would be facilitated by recent developments in philosophy and the physical science. Modem philosophy can contribute to that through *personalism*, which insists that human identity cannot be defined with concepts of individualism; it emerges in and through relationships. Physical science, on the other hand, has, as we have noted, departed already from atomistic and mechanistic conceptions of physical reality interpreting it in relational categories. It is time for theology to do the same, as it is called to engage in a creative effort to interpret patristic thought to our modem world making the fathers instead of a "venerable relic," a "well of living water," as Father Florovsky wanted them to be.

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Process Thought and the Eclipse of God

Abstract: Martin Buber in his famous critique of modern philosophy and psychology, described the philosophical hour through which the world is now passing as a spiritual eclipse—a historical obscuring of "the light of heaven."[1] This essay explores process thought as first formulated by the mathematician/philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, and then expounded by Charles Hartshorne, John Cobb, and other theologians as paradigmatic of Buber's concern. Accordingly, it proposes, that when consciousness shifts in such a way that God becomes recognizable as immediately present, as the aura in which the person of faith lives, the eclipse is over.

Keywords: eclipse, God, philosophy, process, theodicy, theology, spirituality, impassibility

Process Thought

Whitehead's thought and writing is so complex and so dense, that one is hard put to think of anyone who has been able to convey the gist of it in only a paragraph or two; as, for example, might be done by nearly any university student with the existentialism of Jean Paul Sarte or Albert Camus. Nevertheless, here is an attempt, definitely foolhardy, to do just that for those unacquainted with Whitehead's thought.

For Whitehead everything is in motion, everything is evolving, everything is changing, everything, including God, is in process. Molecules, algae and whales, dogs and fleas, human beings and whatever you consider as ultimate is in process. Nothing is in a static state. God is still becoming. In so far as process theology can be said to be *theistic* it is a naturalistic theism, not in the sense of identifying God with nature, but rather in denying the concept of a divine being who can intervene and alter the normal causal principles of the universe. God is enmeshed in time, and is neither omnipotent nor omniscient. God knows only the present with its potentialities. There is a sense in which God can inspire and persuade, but God cannot make things happen. Neither can God prevent anything from happening. Everything that exists has its own level of creativity; and, therefore, possesses the power of freedom, of self-determination and of causal influence. God, it can be said, is as affected by the world as much as the world is affected by God.

This resolves the philosophical problem of evil and suffering by arguing that while God is good, God does not intervene to end the misery of the world because God, en-

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1 Martin Buber, *Eclipse of God: Studies in the Relation Between Religion and Philosophy* (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 1996), 23.

meshed in temporality, is unable to do so. Indeed, it is debated whether God is a superfluous notion in process thought. "Actual entity" is the term Whitehead coined to refer to entities that actually exist, and that relate to other actual entities. The question that then arises is whether God is an actual entity. Whitehead's method of metaphysical discovery begins with the careful observation of immediate experience, then moves to the free play of imagination, and finally engages in rational analysis. He believed that by employing this methodology he could encompass all of metaphysics in one philosophical system. This is obviously an over simplification of process thought, but hopefully will be sufficient to unfold it as illustrative of Buber's criticism.

The Eclipse of God

What the Jewish scholar and mystic Martin Buber called the "eclipse of God" speaks to the way in which modern philosophy, theology, and psychology work to destroy the possibility for intimacy with an eternal, ever-present, Mystery, Thou, or God. This essay sees process philosophy as formulated by the mathematician/philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, and expounded by Charles Hartshorne, John Cobb, and other theologians as paradigmatic of Buber's concern. Technically there is a distinction between process philosophy and process theology; however, the two are formally joined under the rubric of process thought. Understanding, much less critiquing, process thought is a rather daunting task. To begin with, in spite of its efforts to be coherent, it is not a highly linear or systematic philosophy or theology. It is rather a complex and inventive metaphysical "system" employing a number of interlocking arcane concepts. This paper, then, explores how the general orientation and core concepts of process thought are a template of the sort of philosophy Buber felt constituted an "eclipse of the light of heaven, an eclipse of the light of God."[2]

Direction Determines Destination

Process philosophy has its origins in the mathematical mind; and, in this rationalistic orientation has remained constant. Alfred North Whitehead worked most of his life teaching mathematics, first as a professor at Trinity College, Cambridge (1884 to 1910), and then at The Imperial College of Science and Technology. In 1898 his *A Treatise on Universal Algebra* was published. In spite of the title, this book was more about the foundations of geometry than algebra. It attempted to draw together the divergent ideas of research mathematicians in a systematic form. Although this effort established Whitehead's reputation as a scholar, it had little impact on mathematical research. Whitehead's early work included two other books, *Axioms of Projective Geometry* (1906) and *Axioms of Descriptive Geometry* (1907).

Before the completion of these two *Axioms* books, Whitehead was at work on *Principia Mathematica*—a ten-year collaborative project with Bertrand Russell. The intention of *Principia Mathematica* was to work out a set of axioms and inference rules from which all mathematical truths could be proven. However, in 1931, Gödel's *Incompleteness Theorem* proved for any set of axioms and inference rules proposed to encapsulate mathematics, ei-

2 Ibid.

ther the system must be inconsistent, or there must in fact be some truths of mathematics which could not be deduced from them.[3]

Understandably, during the carnage of WW I Whitehead's writing began to take a more philosophical turn—his papers on relational space, while anchored in geometric thought, are explicitly philosophical. In 1919 his *Enquiry into the Principles of Natural Knowledge* appeared, then in 1920 his *The Concept of Nature*. In 1925, facing mandatory retirement at The Imperial College of Science and Technology, Whitehead accepted a position teaching philosophy at Harvard University. A year after arriving at Harvard, he delivered the prestigious Lowell Lectures. These lectures formed the basis for his book *Science and the Modern World* (1925). Following the Lowell Lectures, he presented the 1927/28 Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh resulting in his *Process and Reality* (1929).[4] Later, Hartshorne, Cobb, and Griffin sought to "theologize" *Process and Reality*; however, Whitehead's metaphysical system is determinative for the legitimacy of all process thought. It began and it ends, as a highly academic and esoteric enterprise.

Decoding the terminology of Whitehead's metaphysics is a major challenge. Whitehead not only used common and philosophical language in idiosyncratic ways, but also invented a series of neologisms, including: *appetition*, *concresence*, *conformal*, *formaliter*, *ingression*, *prehension*, *regnant society*, and *superject*. While Whitehead aspired to a literal general description of reality, his obtuse style has proven frustrating for both trained philosophers, and inexperienced graduate students; and, is seen as somewhat useless by more literally minded scientists.[5]

And so, we are left with Pascal's passionate declaration: "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob—not of the philosophers and scholars." This saying, as Buber notes, represents Pascal's, *metanoia*, his repentance, the turning of his consciousness from the God of the philosophers to the God Abraham and Sarah know and trust—to that sort of intimacy with which a couple may know one another when their making love is truly love making.[6]

Process philosophy was spawned in the sea of mathematical reason and nurtured to adulthood in the swirling speculations of academic philosophy. Indeed, the nineteenth century's misplaced confidence in the power of science and reason was the very matrix for process philosophy. And whatever its original "spiritual intentions," process thought has continued to follow the highly rationalistic and naturalistic trajectory plotted at its beginning. However, it is not the intention, but the direction in which one proceeds that determines final destination. If the goal, the intention, is to explore the North Pole, then traveling east along the Prime Meridian will not lead to the desired destination. If one's desire is

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3 Whitehead proposed his own theory of general relativity. Although later corrected it continued to generate problems in application.

4 Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology,* ed. by David Ray Griffith and Donald W. Sherburne, Corrected edition (New York: Free press, 1978).

5 William Grassie, "Resources and Problems in Whitehead's Metaphysics," April 9, 2011. Metnexus.net/essay/resources-and-problems-whiteheads-metaphysics (accessed April 17, 2019).

6 Buber, *Eclipse*, 49.

to experience the *beatific vision*, the path of esoteric intellectual concepts, will, in the end, either stop short of that destination, or miss it entirely.

Knowledge of the Second Kind

C. Robert Mesle in *Process Theology* and John B. Cobb, Jr. in *Jesus' Abba*, both attempt to present a more unobscured and Christian friendly version of process thought. Yet, such portrayals by process theologians are, more than anything else, like ghostly images of Christianity—they are like wispy resemblances of someone who was once was greatly loved but is now only vaguely recalled.[7] Mesle asserts:

> Even if the God of process theism should turn out not to exist, or even if there is no divine being at all, even if we find it more helpful to think of the entire venture as the creation of myths and models, I am convinced that process theology deserves our most serious attention. The ethical model that process thought shows us can transform our whole way of thinking about religion, life and values.[8]

A problem with Mesle's argument, is that the ethical and moral values he endorses are derived from Judeo-Christian Scripture. More than that, historic and ecumenical Christianity believes that these values grow, so to speak, organically out of, and express the very nature, of Divine Reality. The question then becomes: If severed from their roots can these values of love, compassion and justice continue to flourish, or will they wilt and wither like cut flowers in a vase? Mesle strangely asserts that even if there is no God, or if what we thought were eternal verities and universal spiritual principles turn out merely to be helpful "models," process thought still has the power to transform our thinking, life and values. In the end this is akin to a baker of apple pies saying: "Even if all the recipe books are wrong, or it turns out there are no apples or apple trees, my apple pie will still be delicious."

As the Jesuit, priest, scholar and mystic, William Johnston noted, there are two kinds of knowledge. The first is the sort of discursive reasoning common to the academic enterprise. We cannot, of course, entirely escape using this sort of conceptual thinking, however, there is a supra conceptual, mystical, knowledge, a knowledge "of" rather than "about" God, which fills one who is emptied of images and concepts—a loving light that penetrates the shadow of the eclipse.[9] It is this knowledge of the second kind that process theology tends to obscure.

Equation of Suffering

The horrors of World War I were for Whitehead and his wife Evelyn immediate and personal. Their youngest son, Eric Alfred, was killed in action with the Royal Flying Corps in 1918. Whitehead was driven by his personal pain to seek a resolution of the equation of hu-

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7 C. Robert Mesle, *Process Theology: A Basic Introduction* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice, 1993); John Cobb, Jr. *Jesus' Abba: The God Who Has Not Failed* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1963).

8 Mesle, *Process Theology*, 8.

9 William Johnston, *The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing* (Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire and Trabuco Canyon, California: Source Books, 1992), 89-93.

man suffering and evil. His answer, more intellectual than spiritual, was that suffering exists because God is powerless to prevent it. This has continued as a foundational axiom for process theologians who are fond of the old cliché like syllogism:

1. A god that is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving would prevent evil and suffering.
2. Evil and suffering happen.
3. Since evil and suffering happen, an all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving god cannot exist.

Process thought seeks to resolve the dilemma by accepting that God is neither omnipotent nor omniscient. It is not, however, willing to relinquish the notion that God is good.

The syllogism is, within itself, a somewhat obscurantist statement. That is to say, the premise obscures in that it asserts more than is or can be known.

One Who Proves Too Much

It is curious that Whitehead failed to grasp the implications of Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem for his own metaphysical work, for just as surely as it ended the quest of *Principia Mathematica*, so it spells the impossibility of encapsulating all of metaphysics into one philosophical system.[10] *Qui nimium probat nihil probat.*

What if process thought has it wrong? What if God is all-powerful and all-knowing, but indifferent? What if Stephen Crane's poem is true?

> A man said to the universe:
> "Sir, I exist!"
> "However," replied the universe,
> "The fact has not created in me
> A sense of obligation."

Or, perhaps God is pitiless. It is not unusual for psychotherapists to encounter people who believe that an all-powerful and all-knowing God exists, but that God, far from being good and kind, is heartless. They are no more likely to worship an impotent God of process theology than a loveless one.

All the great Christian philosophers, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Anselm, and St. Thomas Aquinas, to name three of the classicists, have wrestled with the philosophical problem of God's impassibility—the logical dilemma of how to make sense of God as both compassionate and unchanging. Hartshorne resolved the problem by arguing, in agreement with Whitehead, that God is not "impassable." While the world is affected by God, God is also affected by the world. As William Wainwright therefore correctly notes, "The controversy of God's impassibility is, rooted in a clash of value intuitions, a deep disagreement over what properties God must have to be unqualifiedly admirable and worthy of worship."[11] For the Christian contemplative such questions are fascinating brain teasers,

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10 Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem cannot be used to prove the existence of God, but does demonstrate any system of logic or numbers always rests on unprovable assumptions; and can never establish a "unifying theory" of metaphysics.

11 William Wainwright, "Concepts of God," Dec 21, 2006; revised Dec 19, 2012. Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy. plato.stanford.edu. (accessed April 16, 2019).

but in the end, to paraphrase Thomas à Kempis, one must choose whether it is best to discuss theories of impassibility learnedly, or to experience the faithfulness of God. Process thought seeks to explain everything, but changes nothing; whereas, biblical and spiritual theology explains little, but changes everything.

There are, of course, multiple philosophical possibilities in accounting for the problem of suffering: (1) there is no God, (2) God is ineffectual, (3) God is cruel, (4) or the solution is less philosophical, and more spiritual. C. S. Lewis, echoing both *Psalms 73* and *The Book of Job*, wrote in *Till We Have Faces*, "I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face the questions die away. What other answer would suffice?"[12] However, with its highly academic orientation, it is precisely this last answer that is no longer visible in process thought.

Freedom

Coupled with the primacy of suffering in process thought is the theme of freedom. God is not all powerful, and knows only what is, including the potentialities of the present, and not what will be; consequently, God, who is enmeshed in temporality,[13] can actualize potentiality but has no "coercive" power.[14] God can invite, persuade, and entice but cannot make things happen.[15] "God," says Mesle, "is the unique Subject, whose love is the foundation of all reality."[16] But Mesle leaves process theology open to the same problems he posits in his caricatures of Judeo-Christian tradition.[17] To say to someone: "God feels really terrible that you have been brutally raped, that your three-year-old has been run over by a drunken driver, that you have terminal cancer, that there is yet another famine, lethal epidemic, or genocide in the world, but unfortunately, while God feels your pain, God is impotent and cannot help," is not particularly consoling. Process thought seems especially vulnerable to Nietzsche's harsh accusation: "Only a God who is imperfect, or something of a sadist could delight in (actualize) a world of such immense misery, violence, pain and suffering."[18] Process philosophy, as we have seen, agrees with Nietzsche. God is imperfect in that God's knowledge and power are both limited.

The question, however, is not even whether God is all-powerful, but does God's power make any difference at all? Couldn't God use a little more influence in raising up wise,

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[12] C. S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces* (San Diego: Harcourt, Inc., 1984), 308.

[13] What is time? Scientifically is it "imaginary;" or an illusion? Is it, as with Tillich, the power of embracing all time periods? Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume I: Reason and Revelation, Being and God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 274.

[14] Langdon Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1959), 97.

[15] The word "coerce" is a curious framing. To be warned that certain behaviors are self-destructive is hardly synonymous with being forced to do something against one's will. Apparently, "We are free to choose, but we are not free to choose the result of our choosing." See: E. Stanley Jones, *The Way* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1946), 3.

[16] Mesle, *Process Theology,* 8.

[17] Mesle, for example, uses "tradition" in multiple and confusing ways which frequently result in a caricature of Christian faith.

[18] Frederick Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883), trans. R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin Books, 1969), 58.

competent, and compassionate world leaders rather than so many malevolent sociopaths? Couldn't a god who actualized quantum physics, do more persuading or revealing, or whatever, to produce some exponential breakthroughs in fighting cancer, hunger, or birth defects? Process theology not only answers "no," but explicitly states there is no certainty that good will ultimately overcome evil.

It is not that process philosophy blocks out all light, any more than a solar eclipse blots out the entire sun. The movie *O' God*, starring George Burns, is perhaps as simple and as appealing a presentation of process theology that a lay person can find—an entirely affable, but ineffectual god who wants us to do better than we are doing when it comes to treating each other with greater kindness and showing more concern for the environment. Indeed, process thought appears to be a product of modern Western culture in that it seeks a way of finding solace in a world mad with fear and suffering, but in a way that guarantees individual autonomy without accountability or personal spiritual transformation—the sort of willingness that is the essence of all spiritual progress. This then is the eclipse of which Buber wrote—the sheer "wilfulness" of philosophy and theology.

Cognitive Cloud

Whitehead himself was an agnostic and it is not easy to grasp what he meant by "God."[19] Many, perhaps most, process philosophers speculate that God is an actual entity, although there is disagreement as to whether God is a series of momentary actual occasions, or a single everlasting and constantly developing actual entity. God is a kind of storehouse of both "envisaged potentialities" and of every "puff" of experience at every level. God as a kind of storage mechanism for knowledge, might remind one of that illustration from quantum physics which says in explaining black holes, that if one's wallet fell into a black hole the wallet would be lost, but the wallet and all it contained would remain as a kind of smear of mathematical information on the edge of the black hole. On the other hand, more than a few process philosophers maintain God is not a necessary element of the process metaphysical system, and may be deleted without diminishment to the model.

Donald Sherburne maintained in his 1971 article, "Whitehead without God," that a non-theistic or "naturalistic" version of process philosophy is more useful and coherent. Whitehead believed, noted Sherburne, that God is metaphysically necessary because God (a) preserves the past; (b) is the ontological ground, or "somewhere" of the eternal objects; and (c) is the source of order, novelty, and limitation in worldly occasions. But, said Sherburne, these roles for God are inconsistent with the metaphysical principles of Whitehead's system and are superfluous.[20]

Whitehead himself argued that ultimate reality is best described in terms of the principle of *creativity*. Creativity is the universal of universals, and is sometimes compared to

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19 As a metaphysical system process thought "denies that ultimately only one individual (God or the Absolute) exists." Delwin Brown, Ralph E. James, Jr., and Gene Reeves, *Process Philosophy and Christian Thought* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1971), 3.

20 Donald Sherburne, "Whitehead Without God." Revised from *The Christian Scholar, L, 3*. (Fall 1967). anthonyflood.com/sherburnewhiteheadwithoutgod.htm (accessed April 16, 2019).

Aristotle's "being *qua* being," or Heidegger's "Being itself"—that is "Becoming itself." All actual entities, even God, are in a sense "creatures" of creativity. Zeus was subject to the principle of destiny—the thread measured and cut by the three Fates, so one may ask: "Is God subject to Creativity?" And, this raises the next obvious question: "Is God, God?" Or, "Is the principle of Creativity God?" Or, "Is the Process itself God?"[21]

As noted, process thought uses a good deal of ink in denying God is omnipotent. Both John A. T. Robinson and Paul Tillich disliked all talk of God's omnipotence. They thought such talk tended to make an object of God. So, whether omnipotence is affirmed or denied God is objectified either way. And, quite soon it is no longer God being discussed. Once a symbol, or a concept, is taken for the thing itself objectification has taken place—God as God has been eclipsed[22]

Nearly all academic philosophy and theology done in the mode of modern scientism and materialism becomes stuck in the ditch of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness—Whitehead's term for treating an abstraction as a concrete reality. The organization of knowledge, as Herman Daly and John Cobb note, requires a high degree of abstraction;[23] consequently, the more successful and established an academic discipline in its development, and the more its practitioners are socialized to think in these abstractions, the more elaborate the abstractions themselves become. In time conclusions are confidently applied to the real world without realizing the degree of abstraction involved. This treatment of abstractions as if they were concrete and possessed functions they cannot have leads to both scientific and metaphysical confusion.[24] As soon as we speak philosophically of the omniscience, omnipresence, or omnipotence of God, or employ and proceed to elaborate upon any of the concepts of process thought, we have smudged the lens through which we hope to glimpse the divine mystery.[25]

Conclusion

What has been posited in this paper is not that one may not be both a process theologian and Christian, but that process philosophy easily leads to that objectification and fallacy of misplaced concreteness Buber believed constituted an eclipse of God. The Quaker philosopher Elton Trueblood wrote, "Once large sections of the clergy were the standard examples of obscurantism, but today their places have been taken by the academic philoso-

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21 If God's acts are conditioned by some principle, such as creativity, God is inescapably governed by the structure of being of which God is then a part and an illustration—like Whitehead's God "in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground." God is then not free. See: Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth*, 97.

22 Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology Vol. 1,* 273.

23 Herman Dally and John Cobb, *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy Toward Community, the Environment and a Sustainable* Future (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 25, 122.

24 Larry Hart, *The Annunciation: A New Evangelization and Apologetic for Mainline Protestants and Progressive Catholics in Postmodern North America* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2017), 188-189.

25 Similarly, process theology speaks of models of ultimate realities, which not only reduces God to a concept (model), but leaves one wondering how many realities can be ultimate before none are ultimate; that is, before one is no longer speaking of "Ultimate Reality" at all. For example, see: Jeannie Diller and Asa Kasher, ed. Introduction to *Models of God and Alternative Realities* (New Springer Press, 2013).

phers."[26] Charles Chestnut furnishes an appropriate conclusion:

> Moses asked God what his name was, because he wanted a logical and rational *theory about* God. What God told him instead was simply, 'I am what I am.' What will save us is not a *theory about* God, but meeting God and recognizing that he-whom, we-confront "right in front of us" (so to speak) is the one we call God. Or, in other words, learning what the word God *means*, refers to learning how to recognize those events and circumstances where we can see and feel and hear God immediately present and acting in our lives.[27]

When we grasp, with both heart and mind, what Chestnut is saying, the eclipse is over, and philosophy no longer blots out the beatific vision.

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The Paradox of an Absolute Ineffable God of Islam

Abstract: The laws of logic and two of the broader theories of truth are fundamental components that are responsible for espousing an ontology and meaningfulness in matters of analytic philosophy. In this respect they have persisted as conventional attitudes or modes of thought which most, if not all, of analytic philosophy uses to philosophize. However, despite the conceptual productivity of these components they are unable to account for matters that are beyond them. These matters would include certain theological beliefs, for instance, that transcend the purview of analytic ontology and the meaningfulness it ensues. Any attempt in making rational sense of such beliefs that are insusceptible to these methodological components would conventionally prohibit (restrict) us from rationally believing in them. This is because we would be unable to make sense of such beliefs with the aid of these methodological components. As a result of this, religious beliefs of this particular nature would be deemed irrational. I shall demonstrate this point by applying both of these components to an absolutely ineffable God of Islam. This would entail, attempting to make sense of an absolutely ineffable God of Islam in virtue of the laws of logic and two broad categories of truth theories, namely, substantive and insubstantive theories. I hope to establish that applying both of these methodological components in attempting to make sense of an absolutely ineffable God of Islam would not be conceptually viable. It would result in a contradictory notion which I shall allude to as the paradox of ineffability.

Key words: analytic philosophy; ontology; logic; substantive; insubstantive; truth; Islam; God; ineffability; paradox

Introduction

Aside from the more intricate methodological disputes, analytic philosophy assumes certain methodological components that are essential to how it operates. These are the laws of logic and two broad categories of truth theories. Both of which are components that are employed in order to ensure theoretical rationality. Rationality is sought to be able to make sense of things in ways that are cognitively satisfying. Cognitive satisfaction, in this sense, has been an essential contributor in giving rise to variations of conceptual productivity that has been attributed to analytic philosophy since its birth. Predominantly, these variations of conceptual productivity are inclusive of being able to conceive and express our conceptions in ways that are ontologically quantifiable and thus meaningful. The laws of logic and two of the broader theories of truth are fundamental components that are responsible for ensuring such an ontology and meaningfulness. In this respect they have

persisted as conventional attitudes or modes of thought which most, if not all, of analytic philosophy uses to philosophize. However, despite the conceptual productivity of these components they are unable to account for matters that are beyond them. These matters would include certain theological beliefs, for instance, that transcend the purview of analytic ontology and the meaningfulness it ensues. Any attempt in making rational sense of such beliefs that are insusceptible to these methodological components would conventionally prohibit (restrict) us from rationally believing in them. This is because we would be unable to make sense of such beliefs with the aid of these methodological components. As a result of this, religious beliefs of this particular nature would be deemed irrational.

I shall like to demonstrate this point by applying both of these components to an absolutely ineffable God of Islam. This would entail, attempting to make sense of an absolutely ineffable God of Islam in virtue of the laws of logic and two broad categories of truth theories, namely, substantive and insubstantive theories. I hope to establish that applying both of these methodological components in attempting to make sense of an absolutely ineffable God of Islam would not be conceptually viable. It would result in a contradictory notion which I shall allude to as the paradox of ineffability.

I anticipate establishing this with the following argument:

In making sense of things, analytic philosophy typically assumes:

The laws of logic

Substantive and/or insubstantive theories of truth

Applying both of these assumptions ((i) and (ii)) in making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam would result in a paradox (of ineffability).

Therefore, making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam in virtue of analytic philosophy would result in a paradox (of ineffability).

My argument shall reflect the structure of my essay. It will consist of three sections, each establishing the premises of my argument respectively. The first section will focus on establishing how analytic philosophy in particular assumes the laws of logic and substantive or insubstantive theories of truth in making sense of things. Much, although not all, of this section will be presented in a descriptive fashion in order to set the scene for what follows. A large part of what I shall draw on in the first section may seem somewhat apparent. Nonetheless, it is an integral part of my argument that lays the foundations upon which I shall build the analysis in the subsequent section. The second section will focus on establishing premise two of my argument. This section shall be the most important part of my argument. It will demonstrate how the application of both the methodological components (of analytic philosophy) fails in making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam in ways that are paradoxical. Prior to demonstrating this, I shall explain what I take to represent an absolute ineffable God of Islam. Thereafter, I shall demonstrate how the failure of each of the components in attempting to make sense of this ineffable God would result in the paradox of ineffability. The final section will offer a brief summary of the ground that has been covered in this essay and provide a brief account of how I have reached the conclusion that I have. Moreover, I shall allude to a tentative solution to the issue I have outlined in the course of this essay.

1. In making sense of things, analytic philosophy typically assumes:
(i) The laws of logic,
(ii) Substantive and/or insubstantive theories of truth

One of the more notable projects of philosophical inquiry is attempting to make sense of things. Philosophy's role in this respect would be to exercise cognitive aptitudes in attempting to construe all that there is in an intelligible manner. Engaging with philosophy would thus involve trying to obtain a form of cognitive satisfaction. Aside from the sheer diversity of methodological approaches that lay claim to such kinds of cognitive satisfaction, it is usually considered to bear a strong affinity with rational order. Rescher (2017) states this point in the following manner:

> The discipline [philosophy] seeks to bring rational order, system, and intelligibility to the often confusing diversity of our cognitive affairs enabling us to find our way about in the world in a practically effective and cognitively satisfying way. (Rescher, 2017, p. 33)

Rescher (2017) makes an unequivocal association between philosophy and the project of making sense of things. He does so while inferring that the abandonment of philosophy would imply withdrawing from the project of making sense of things[1]. Moore (2017) purports a similar view. For Moore (2017) "Philosophy is an attempt, by humans, from their unique position in the world, to make sense both of themselves and of that position." (Moore, 2017, p. 45) However, the phrase 'make sense' is ambiguous. Moore appreciates this by referring to it as "a polymorphous term". Elsewhere, while speaking on metaphysics, Moore (2012) draws on the meaning of the phrase 'to make sense of things'[2]. He proposes possible ways in which the phrase can be comprehended, such as the "meaning", "purpose", or "explanation" of something. Nevertheless, whatever understanding one derives from such synonyms, it would undoubtedly be myriad.

Given this, Moore (2012) goes on to make an important distinction between the ways in which the term 'to make sense' ought to be apprehended.

> When 'make sense' is used intransitively, there is a further range of associations. It is then equivalent not to 'understand' but to 'be intelligible', 'admit of understanding', perhaps even 'be rational'. (Moore, 2012, p. 5)

In light of Moore's (2012) view, it not only seems befitting, but somewhat intuitive, to conceive of 'making sense' in virtue of being rational – particularly within the purview of phi-

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1 To those who are prepared simply to abandon philosophy, to withdraw from the whole project of trying to make sense of things, we can have little to say. (How can one reason with those who deny the pointfulness and propriety of reasoning?) (Rescher, 2017, p. 33)

2 The 'sense' in question may be the meaning of something, the purpose of something, or the explanation for something. This is connected to the fact that a near-synonym for 'make sense of' is 'understand' and the range of things that someone might naturally be said to understand (or not) is both vast and very varied. It includes languages, words, phrases, innuendos, theories, proofs, books, people, fashions, patterns of behaviour, suffering, the relativity of simultaneity, and many more. Thus making sense of things can embrace on the one hand finding something that is worth living for, perhaps even finding the meaning of life, and on the other hand discovering how things work, for instance by ascertaining relevant laws of nature. I do not want to draw a veil over *any* of these. The generality of metaphysics will no doubt prevent it from embracing some of them, but that is another matter. (Moore, 2012, p. 5)

losophy. It's worth noticing how he distinguishes 'make sense' from 'understand'. 'Making sense' and 'understanding' are surly synonymous terms in some ways. Although, as Moore (2012) puts it,

> ... the range of things that someone might naturally be said to understand (or not) is both vast and very varied. It includes languages, words, phrases, innuendos, theories, proofs, books, people, fashions, patterns of behaviour, suffering, the relativity of simultaneity, and many more. Thus making sense of things can embrace on the one hand finding something that is worth living for, perhaps even finding the meaning of life, and on the other hand discovering how things work, for instance by ascertaining relevant laws of nature. (Moore, 2012, p. 5)

He appears to differentiate between an objective meaning of 'understand' and a working one. The distinction, along with what he means by both these perspectives, is rather apparent in the selected quote. For Moore (2012) then, the phrase 'make sense' should be conceived of as being susceptible to understanding[3]. A kind of understanding that involves ascertaining the functionalities of things and not one which is confined to discovering a purpose. The mode in which such functionalities of things may be determined bears a close affinity with rationality. A further reason for associating the two terms 'making sense' and 'rationality' with one another has to do with how we conceive of 'rationality'.

Rationality, in broader terms, is divided into theoretical and practical perspectives[4]. A theoretical perspective of rationality focuses on the epistemology of belief. It attempts to determine what qualifies as rational and whether it ought to be believed on such accounts of rationality. A practical perspective of rationality focuses on determining which actions, intentions, and desires qualify as rational. Given the nature of my argument, I shall only concern myself with the theoretical perspective of rationality. Further variations of rationality, that are primarily semantic differences, have been offered by Hanna (2006). He presents rationality by way of three basic distinctions[5]. In sum of the three distinctions, he suggests that,

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3 I believe that the sense- making involved in philosophy, at least in philosophy of the best sort, is, quite literally, sense- *making* : not an exploration of something antecedently given, but a creation of something, most notably a creation of concepts by which to live ... (Moore, 2017, p. 45)

4 The domain of rationality is customarily divided into the theoretical (see Robert Audi's chap. 2) and the practical. (Mele and Rawling, 2004, p. 3)

5 The first basic distinction is between (a) the *mentalistic* sense of rationality and (b) the *procedural* sense of rationality. In the mentalistic sense, rationality is a complex psychological capacity for logical inference and insight, and also for practical deliberation and decision making. By contrast, in the procedural sense, rationality is a complex formal property of a certain class of mechanical, mathematical, computational, or logical processes, namely the property of being (i) well formed and (ii) either provable and recursive (Turing-computable), valid (truth-preserving), or sound (valid with true premises). The crucial difference here is that rationality in the mentalistic sense is such that all of its manifestations are conscious, whereas some process can quite easily be rational in the procedural sense without being in any way conscious.

The second basic distinction is beween (c) the *meeting-the-minimalstandards* sense of rationality, and (d) the *meeting-the-maximal-or-idealstandards* sense of rationality. In the meeting-the-minimal-standards sense, rationality means either possessing a psychological capacity for rationality or meeting the well-formedness conditions for being a rational procedure of the relevant sort. By contrast, in the meeting-the-maximal-or-ideal-standards sense, rationality means either perfectly using a psychological capacity or else perfectly satisfying the provability/computability conditions, validity conditions, or soundness conditions of the relevant sort of

The crucial three-way difference here is that whereas in the principled sense, rationality means generating or recognizing rules that are absolute or *unconditional*, in the holistic sense, by contrast, rationality means generating or recognizing rules or laws that are merely thoroughly interdependent or *mutually conditioned* (hence none of those rules or laws can have a greater degree of necessity or certainty, or be more binding, than the modally or epistemically weakest proposition in the total holistic network of rules or laws), and, by another contrast, rationality in the instrumental sense means generating or recognizing rules that are merely empirically regular or *conditional* (hence none of those rules or laws can be fully necessary or certain or binding). (Hanna, 2006, p. xvii-xviii)

The underlying feature of these three distinctions appears to suggest that, in their most basic forms, they all seek to make sense of the things in question. Of course, the way in which each of them attempts to do so ostensibly varies. It's rather difficult to be able to conceive of rationality in any one of these three senses (namely in the principled, the holistic, and the instrumental) in a *nonsensical* manner. The fact that these three distinctions of rationality have been termed 'senses' is apparent enough to demonstrate their necessary connection to making sense of things. Any attempt then, to rationalise in the absence of making sense, or make sense in the absence of rationalising, in the most basic forms, would apparently lead to an inconsistency. 'Inconsistency' may be understood as antithetical to rationality. In this sense it would be an equivalent term to 'irrationality'. Irrationality, as Davidson (2004) said, "is a mental process or state—a rational process or state—gone wrong" (Davidson, 2004, p. 169). Rationality's going wrong would imply its failure to fulfil its essential role of reasoning. In this case rationality would be contrasted with 'a-rational' or 'non-rational'[6]. A failure to reason in ways that unequivocally ensues forms of irrationality would be indicative of nonsensicalness.

Therefore, from the distinctions that I have referred to, it seems safe to say that the objective of rationality is to systematize our thoughts in ways which we, at the very

rational procedure. The crucial difference here is that in the meeting-the-minimalstandards sense, irrationality means lacking the basic conditions necessary for rationality, and hence means *nonrationality*; whereas in the meeting themaximal- or-ideal-standards sense, irrationality merely means falling short of perfect rationality.

The third and last basic distinction is between (e) the *principled* sense of rationality, (f) the *holistic* sense of rationality, and (g) the *instrumental* sense of rationality. In the principled sense, rationality means the possession of a capacity for generating or recognizing necessary truths, a priori beliefs, strictly universal normative rules, nonconsequentialist moral obligations, and categorical "ought"-claims. Put in historical terms, this is the *Kantian* conception of rationality, acccording to which "reason is the faculty of a priori principles." By contrast, in the holistic sense, rationality means the possession of a capacity for systematically seeking coherence (or, to use a contemporary term of art, "reflective equilibrium") across a network or web of beliefs, desires, emotions, intentions, and volitions. In historical terms, this is the *Hegelian* conception of rationality, according to which "the truth is the whole." And finally, in the instrumental sense, rationality means the possession of a capacity for generating or recognizing contingent truths, a posteriori beliefs, contextually normative rules, consequentialist obligations, and hypothetical "ought"-claims. Put historically, this is the *Humean* conception of rationality, according to which "reason is the slave of the passions." (Hanna, 2006, p. xvi-xvii)

6 'Rational' has at least two relevant senses: capable of reasoning ('RATIONAL', contrasting with 'a-rational' or 'non-rational') and: using this capacity properly or well ('rational ', contrasting with 'irrational'). 'Rational', in turn, has a stronger and a weaker interpretation: in conformity with the agent's goals and beliefs ('weak rationality') and: in conformity with the agent's reasonable goals and justified beliefs ('strong rationality'). (Haack, 1993, p. 177)

least, are able to obtain cognitive satisfaction. This cognitive satisfaction is achieved by attempting to make sense of things which in turn is one of the more notable projects of philosophy. Such an enterprise, from a universal perspective, would conceptually resist forms of irrationality while meticulously seeking to shed intelligible light on fundamental questions. Audi (2011) speaks of this sort of rationality as a global one, which is "… a kind of making sense (not being "crazy"), as where we say "Thank God he's rational again after the accident" or, for focal cases, "That view makes sense, but can you give a good argument for it?"" (Audi, 2011, p. 16)

(i) The laws of logic

If we are to conceive of rationality in the most basic sense of the word, then it would have to conform to some universal principles. This is for two reasons. Firstly, these principles would be fundamental in allowing rationality to fulfil its essential role of reasoning. These principles would be fundamental in the sense that their defiance would result in 'a-rationality' or 'non-rationality'. Secondly, from a reductionist position, if the term 'rationality' is to receive a kind of global appreciation, then it would need to function in virtue of some principles. These principles would need to be considered as universal principles in order to avoid drawing on exceptional cases that would act as counterexamples.

These fundamental principles or axioms that I am referring to are the laws of logic. Audi has alluded to this in the following manner, "Our illustrations make it plain that global rationality requires a certain minimal internalization of basic principles of logic, deductive and inductive." (Audi, 2011, p. 17) For Audi it seems far too obvious for anyone to seriously doubt that rationality at odds with logic is irrational. With regards to how things stand, at least for the majority, rationality's association with the laws of classical logic is essentially what makes rationality *rational*. These laws are the fundamental components that allow rationality to fulfil its essential role of reasoning. In other words, adherence to the laws of classical logic would prevent rationality from becoming irrational. There are those of course who adopt an alternative position such as Priest (2006)[7].

The laws of classical logic are commonly identified as:

1. The law of identity: $\alpha \equiv \alpha$

2. The law of non-contradiction: $\neg \, (\alpha \wedge \neg \alpha)$

3. The law of excluded middle: $\alpha \vee \neg \alpha$

These laws, within the purview of classical logic, have been considered as foundational axioms that are necessary for being rational. This is what Fogelin (2003) has implied. It is, for him, a central idea in how he understands Aristotle's account of intellectual virtues. "To be rational" according to Fogelin (2003), one must "conform to the laws of logic" (Fogelin, 2003, p. 18). It should be noted however that the law of identity is more specifically attributed to

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7 Consistency has been taken to be the very cornerstone of rationality. But this view has itself no rational ground: it would seem to be simply the legacy of Aristotle. Indeed an inconsistent view may be the very embodiment of rationality. (Priest, 2006, p. 129)

Leibniz[8]. The law of non-contradiction[9] and excluded middle, on the other hand, have been expressed by Aristotle in his Metaphysics[10]. Although many of Aristotle's views have been contested since antiquity, the law of non-contradiction, for the most part, has championed an authoritative role. Priest (2006) sums this up rather succinctly in the following manner:

> With the exception of Hegel and his fellow-travellers, and whilst Aristotle's opinion on nearly every other matter has been overturned—or at least challenged—nearly every Western philosopher and logician has accepted the authority of Aristotle on this matter. There is hardly a defence of the Law since Aristotle's, worth mentioning. (Priest, 2006, p. 7)

According to Priest (2006) Aristotle's view regarding the law of non-contradiction has been upheld as high orthodoxy since the medieval times. The West, in particular, has considered this law to be incontrovertible to the extent that they have not felt the need to provide any further evidence for it[11]. This attitude has not merely persisted, but is actively, as Beall (2004) puts it, "an entrenched 'unassailable dogma' of Western thought" (Beall, 2004, p. 3).

Analytic philosophy has demonstrated this point more apparently. Its emergence and development in the early part of the twentieth century is, in the most part, a prod-

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8 Feldman (1970) has explored whether the law of identity was actually formulated by Leibniz. He concludes that Leibniz did not present any version of it; however, there is one reason for why it is associated with him. Feldman goes on to articulate this reason. What is more pertinent in this case however is what he states in the opening of his essay. This reads as follows: A certain fundamental view about identity is associated with Leibniz. Many contemporary philosophers call the principle which expresses this view "Leibniz' Law." Some even go further and speak of "Leibniz-identity" or "identity in Leibniz' sense." One particularly explicit statement of the more moderate point can be found in Tarski's Introduction to Logic: "Among the logical laws concerning the concept of identity the most fundamental is the following: x = y if, and only if, x has every property which y has, and y has every property which x has. This law was first stated by LEIBNIZ (although in somewhat different terms) and hence may be called LEIBNIZ' LAW." Tarski did not provide a reference to the place where, according to him, Leibniz stated that law. In fact, it is not at all clear just where or how Leibniz is supposed to have stated this principle, even though a great many philosophers assume that he did state it somewhere and somehow. (Feldman, 1970, p. 510)

9 The classic source of much thought about contradiction comes from Aristotle's Book Γ of the *Metaphysics*. (Beall, 2004, p. 2

10 The most indisputable of all beliefs is that contradictory statements are not at the same time true (Met. 1011b13-4). It is impossible for any one to believe the same thing to be and not to be, as some think like Heraclitus says. (Met. 1005b23-5) A thing cannot at the same time be and not be (Met. 996b29-30). Our text, then, is *Metaphysics* Γ, 1003*a* 21–1012*b*34 (future references are abbreviated). The arguments we are concerned with occur largely in chapter 4, but let us start with a quick look at the whole book. In the first three chapters Aristotle explains that there is a study whose job is to investigate the most fundamental features of "being *qua* being", i.e. the properties that all entities have merely in virtue of being entities. It turns out that these are the Laws of Non- Contradiction (LNC) and Excluded Middle (LEM). (Priest, 2006, p. 8)

11 But it is fair to say that, at least since the Middle Ages, Aristotle's views concerning contradiction have been orthodoxy. (This is so obvious, that it is hardly worth documenting.) They are taken for granted so much that, as far as I know, there is no sustained defence of the LNC in Western philosophy other than Aristotle's. Why? I really don't know. It is certainly not because of the rational persuasiveness of Aristotle's arguments. I suspect (unhappily) that the view was accepted simply on the basis of the magisterial authority of Aristotle's texts in the Middle Ages. In general, that authority disappeared long ago, of course. In logic it hung on till the twentieth century; most of it there has been swept out since then, but the views about contradiction have hung on doggedly. (Priest, 2006, p. 121)

uct of a new system of logic. The rise of analytic philosophy, however, is usually associated with a linguistic turn that is driven by anti-metaphysical initiatives. Despite the evident hostility that was directed at metaphysics by the inauguration of analytic philosophy, we find as Beaney (2012) has pointed out, that its founding fathers engaged with metaphysical conceptions in different respects[12]. Nonetheless, metaphysics bears a close relationship with logic that has proved to be central throughout the history of analytic philosophy. In fact, logic is foundational for much of metaphysics. Beaney (2012) has referred to Micheal Dummett in this respect, who upheld that "it is logic that provides the basis for metaphysics rather than the other way round ..." (Beaney, 2012, p. 257).

Gottlob Frege is considered as one of the founding fathers of analytic philosophy. He was predominantly concerned with establishing logicism. Logicism is the thesis that arithmetic is reducible to logic. Frege's initial book, *Begriffsschrift* which was published in 1879, is testimony to his profound engagement with the logicism programme. His attempt in achieving this motivated him to formulate a more powerful system of logic than the traditional Aristotelian logic (syllogistic theory) that had been dominant prior to him[13]. This new system of logic, namely first-order predicate logic/predicate calculus, involves devising (existential and universal) quantifier notations and integrating the propositional calculus. It proves to be a sophisticated system of logic in the sense that it grants quantifying over more complex statements. It operates by way of "function-argument analysis" as Beaney (2012) puts it. This can be distinguished from the traditional subject-predicate analysis.

This extended function appeared to convince Frege that quantificational logic managed to represent reality with the same degree of certainty and objectivity that mathematics offered[14]. For Frege this meant that quantificational logic possesses a mathematical proficiency in quantifying over the things that are situated in reality. However, mathematics itself needed to be founded upon certain underlying principles or axioms that would permit the kind of certainty and objectivity it is commonly associated with. This was about

12 If we look at the work of the four founders of analytic philosophy, Frege, Russell, Moore, and Wittgenstein, we find metaphysical conceptions at the heart of their endeavours. Frege, for example, regarded numbers and the truth-values as logical objects. Russell and Moore in their early work developed a realist view of propositions. Even when Russell abandoned the metaphysics of propositions in his later work, this was replaced by a metaphysics of facts. Wittgenstein, in the *Tractatus*, articulated a raft of theses that seem paradigmatically metaphysical. This author outlines some of the key metaphysical conceptions of Frege, Russell, Moore, and the early Wittgenstein, and explores the connections with their logical views. It also discusses the status of the metaphysical statements that Frege and Wittgenstein, in particular, found themselves making. (Beaney, 2012, p. 257)

13 The relationship between them is by no means simply that of primitive to more sophisticated (though modern logic is indeed more sophisticated), nor is it simply that Fregean logic *replaced* traditional logic, rebuilding from scratch and ignoring all the old ideas. Modern logic is neither completely different nor a straightforward expansion of the old, and a detailed comparison of the two yields valuable insights. The transition from one conceptual 'paradigm' to another is always fascinating, and the overthrow of syllogistic theory by Fregean logic is as important in logic as the Copernican revolution in astronomy or the change from Newtonian to quantum mechanics in physics. (Beaney, 1996, p. 7)

14 Frege's main goal in philosophy was to ground the certainty and objectivity of mathematics in the fundamental laws of logic, and to distinguish both logic and mathematics from empirical science in general, and from the psychology of human reasoning in particular. (Soames, 2014, p. 4)

demonstrating "... how to arrive at justified knowledge of mathematics from antecedent knowledge of the underlying principles" (Soames, 2014, p. 30-31). The accuracy to which such antecedent principles gives rise to would be conditional upon their very accuracy. If mathematical truths are derived from underlying principles and axioms that are considered 'primary', in the sense that all other truths are derived from them, then they would be indicative of corresponding truths.

For Frege these underlying principles or axioms were the fundamental laws of logic. The laws of logic were, as he put it, "laws on which all knowledge rests". As important as these laws served to be for Frege, he did not appear to provide any compelling evidence to suggest how they were known to be *true*. Although he entertains this question, he does not present a substantive or insubstantive case for the laws being true themselves and nor for our upholding them as true[15]. He does, however, claim to have provided a ground for holding these laws of logic as true. Nonetheless, this is hardly satisfactory. Soames (2014) recapitulates Frege's outlook in the following manner:

> Some logical principles are justified by deriving them from other, more fundamental ones. The process of justification ends with the most basic logical laws, which are self-evidently true, and knowable without any further justifying reason. In addition to being self-evident, Frege takes these fundamental laws to be the most pragmatically significant general truths underlying all of our reasoning. (Soames, 2014, p. 31)

It is evident from Soames's (2014) passage that Frege considered the laws of logic as self-evident truths that did not require the need for any further justification. Frege in a famous passage is quoted to have said that "the laws of truth are not psychological laws: they are boundary stones fixed in an eternal foundation, which our thinking can overflow, but never displace" (Frege quoted in Rumfitt, 2017, p. 1). Rumfitt (2017) goes on to clarify that for Frege the 'laws of truth' *are* the 'laws of logic'. The laws of logic, as Frege depicted them, are to be understood as entrenched 'boundary stones' that are set in an 'eternal foundation'. It's not exactly clear what he means by an 'eternal foundation' here. According to Beaney (1996), however, "Frege assumed that these laws were transcendentally given" (Beaney, 1996, p. 15).

Frege eventually abandoned his logicism project after receiving a letter from Bertrand Russell in which he pointed out a paradox (which came to be known as Russell's paradox). Russell, however, continued with the project. He dedicated the next decade of his life in trying to resolve the paradox and demonstrate how logicism could overcome the contradiction that arose therein. Russell developed a theory of types which attempted to provide a philosophical justification for the kinds of responses he offered in resolving the paradox. The details and degree of his success bears little relevance here. Nonetheless, what is

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15 Now the question of why and with what right we acknowledge a logical law to be true, logic can only answer by reducing it to another logical law. Where that is not possible, logic can give no answer. Leaving aside logic, we may say: we are forced to make judgments by our nature and external circumstances; and if we make judgments, we cannot reject this law—of identity, for example; we must recognize it if we are not to throw our thought into confusion and in the end renounce judgment altogether. I do not wish to either dispute or endorse this view and only remark that what we have here is not a logical implication. What is given is not a ground [reason] for [something's] being true, but of our holding [it] as true. (Frege quoted in Soames, 2014, p. 31)

relevant is that he adhered to the laws of logic in doing so. In fact, so did Frege. This can be acknowledged from the mere fact that Russell had identified a contradiction in Frege's logicism programme. For Russell to have considered a contradiction to be conceptually intolerable, and thus problematic, clearly implies that he adhered to the laws of logic. Moreover, for Frege to have abandoned his logicism porgramme after he had acknowledged the contradiction also suggests that he too adhered to the laws of logic. Frege's abandonment of the logicism programme bears testimony that he conceded to having defied the laws of logic.

Moreover, for Russell, the truths of the laws of logic were central in obtaining coherence[16]. If any of these laws are opposed then it would result in incoherence. However, with regards to the coherence of the laws themselves, Russell appears to circumvent the issue. He does so by diverting his readers' attention to the consequence of not adhering to the laws as opposed to providing evidence for them[17].

In light of Frege's and Russell's initiatives, who are considered to be among the founding fathers of analytic philosophy, it is clear that the laws of logic have been held in very high regard. It is a different matter, although a very interesting one, as to whether they succeeded in providing sufficient evidence for upholding the laws of logic in the uncompromising way they did. Nevertheless, this outlook with regards to the laws of logic has continued to persist, for the most part, in the development of analytic philosophy. It may be contested, however, that the way analytic philosophy stands today is not entirely representative of Frege's and Russell's initiatives that took place at the turn of the twentieth century. Analytic philosophy has considerably moved on since then and is continuing to evolve in different respects. Thus, to present analytic philosophy in virtue of certain projects that are distinctively representative of its initiation and not how it stands today would be a mischaracterization of analytic philosophy.

This is a pertinent point which cannot be disregarded. The beginning phase of analytic philosophy and the projects it has been associated with are not to be taken as parallel representations of how analytic philosophy is conceived of in contemporary times[18]. This is not

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[16] The other objection to this definition of truth is that it assumes the meaning of 'coherence' known, whereas, in fact, 'coherence' presupposes the truth of the laws of logic. Two propositions are coherent when both may be true, and are incoherent when one at least must be false. Now in order to know whether two propositions can both be true, we must know such truths as the law of contradiction. For example, the two propositions, 'this tree is a beech' and 'this tree is not a beech', are not coherent, because of the law of contradiction. But if the law of contradiction itself were subjected to the test of coherence, we should find that, if we choose to suppose it false, nothing will any longer be incoherent with anything else. Thus the laws of logic supply the skeleton or framework within which the test of coherence applies, and they themselves cannot be established by this test. (Russell, 2008, p. 81)

[17] See note 16.

[18] Faced with these developments, one might wonder whether it makes sense to talk of 'analytic philosophy' any longer; as Frege once remarked, the wider the extension of a term, the less content it has (1884,§29). Wanting to restrict the label to the early phase of the tradition, some have argued that analytic philosophy had exhausted itself by the 1970s (at the latest), and that we are now in a 'post-analytic' age. These views, however, do not reflect the widespread use of 'analytic philosophy' to refer to much contemporary philosophy, and the term 'early analytic philosophy' has been introduced to refer to the early period. It seems best, then, to respect

to infer that they are two distinct enterprises either. The plethora of divergent ideas and literature that has emerged in more recent times, by those who brand themselves as analytic philosophers, are in some ways indicative of earlier philosophical themes. This may be apparent in some respects more than others. However, it would be difficult to completely overlook the incidental association between the more contemporary developments and its beginnings.

My point, nevertheless, is to do with how adherence to the laws logic has candidly persisted throughout the birth and continuing evolution of analytic philosophy. Despite the sheer contrasting positions that surround analytic philosophy from its inception to current times, it seems evident that its major proponents, for the most part, have adhered to the laws of logic. The adherence to the laws of logic can be traced back to its founding fathers, namely Frege and Russell, as I have demonstrated. Most contemporary analytic philosophers have also manifested a somewhat unwavering attitude in this respect[19]. It's safe to say that such an attitude towards the laws of logic have been upheld for the sake of being able to make sense of things. From this perspective the laws of logic have been prerequisites for being able to make sense of things. They have allowed analytic philosophers to rigorously pursue analytic ambitions[20]. These ambitions have supposedly helped analytic philosophy in being able to make sense of things that prove to be thorough and precise.

Logic presupposes a notion of truth

Logic has proved to be the cornerstone upon which most, if not all of, analytic philosophy has been founded. Logic is one of the essential contributors which grants analytic philosophy the theoretical aptitude to make sense of things. Similarly, analytic philosophy bestows

the current use of the term as much as possible and treat analytic philosophy as a tradition that is healthier and stronger today, albeit more diverse, than it has ever been in the past. Certainly, a concern with the *history* of analytic philosophy should err on the side of inclusiveness. Even if there are some philosophers, schools of thought, or periods that some would wish to exclude from the tradition, their relationship to analytic philosophy, on whatever narrower conception is favoured, will still be relevant in understanding the nature and development of analytic philosophy, so conceived. (Beaney, 2015, p. 5-6)

19 Already when I worked on modal logic it had seemed to me, as Wiggins has said, that the Leibnitzian principle of the indiscernibility of identicals was as self-evident as the law of contradiction. (Kripke, 2001, p. 3) We cannot, I think, ever make sense of someone's accepting a plain and obvious contradiction: no one can believe a proposition of the form (p and not-p) while appreciating that the proposition is of this form. (Davidson, 2004, p. 198) In standard logic, a contradiction is said to imply everything. Thus there are valid arguments in which the premises seem irrelevant to the conclusion: for instance, when a contradiction about the weather implies any conclusion you like about the economy. Most logicians, and I for one, think this situation unproblematic; but some think it very objectionable, and so there is a flourishing industry of building systems *of* 'relevant logic' in which this supposedly objectionable thing will not happen. (Lewis, 1998, p. 2-3)

20 Rea (2011) provides two sets of ambitions of analytic philosophy. These are as follows: First set – 1 ... to identify the scope and limits of our powers to obtain knowledge of the world', and 2 ... to provide such true explanatory theories as we can in areas of inquiry (metaphysics, morals, and the like) that fall outside of the scope of the natural sciences. Second Set – 1. Write as if philosophical positions and conclusions can be adequately formulated in sentences that can be formalized and logically manipulated. 2. Prioritize precision, clarity, and logical coherence. 3. Avoid substantive (non-decorative) use of metaphor and other tropes whose semantic content outstrips their propositional content. 4. Work as much as possible with well-understood primitive concepts, and concepts that can be analysed in terms of those. 5. Treat conceptual analysis (insofar as it is possible) as a source of evidence.

much emphasis on expressing its content by way of logical rigor. However, logic alone is not sufficient in achieving this. There is something that presupposes logic. This is the notion of truth. The collaboration between the notion of truth and logic is what allows analytic philosophy to succeed in making sense of things in a way that is cognitively satisfying. Although both components are essential for analytic philosophy to succeed in making sense of things they are not to be conflated[21]. Allow me to draw the distinction between them which is rather important for my purposes.

Logic is the study of various methods and principles that are primarily concerned with distinguishing good reasoning from bad. In order for logic to achieve this goal it primarily engages with arguments that are representative of how one goes about reasoning. An argument, in its basic form, is comprised of one conclusion (a proposition) and reasons (premises) to support that conclusion. The premises and conclusion that constitute an argument are what constitutes its logical form. The logical form is a structure that represents a specific sequence which seeks to determine logical consistency or inconsistency. The individual premises and conclusion that constitute the logical form are not representative of any truth-value that establishes how the world is or is not. Instead, they are like blank canvases that are reserved for contents that have a truth-value.

Logic's primary objective, in this respect, is to determine whether the conclusion sequentially follows from the premises that are presented in its support. This means it focuses on the inferential steps that move from the premises to their conclusion. It does this by evaluating the logical form of an argument and not its truth-value. If the logical form of an argument is one that sequentially follows then it would be considered a valid argument, otherwise it would be an invalid argument. The contents along with its truth-value, which make up the premises and conclusion, are irrelevant in determining the validity of an argument. As a matter of fact, you needn't know what the premises and conclusion even mean to be able to determine its validity[22]. Accordingly, it would be a technical error to describe the form of an argument as true or false. The truth-value of an argument is

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21 To say that logic is primarily concerned with truth and not with reasoning would be inaccurate. Smith (2012) makes this claim where he states that "Logic, then, is primarily concerned with truth, not with reasoning" (Smith, 2012, p. 4). This inaccuracy would be one which disregards the subtle distinction between reasoning and truth. These are two distinct features. It is one thing to try and determine the truth of the opening premise and quite another to consider whether it sequentially moves to the subsequent premise and then to its conclusion. Smith (2013) draws on this distinction in the following manner: The premisses (and conclusions) of arguments can be about all sorts of topics: their truth is usually no business of the logician. If we are arguing about historical matters, then it is the historian who is the expert about the truth of our premisses; if we are arguing about some matter of physics, then the physicist is the one who can help us about the truth of our premisses; and so on. The specific concern of logic, by contrast, is not the truth of initial premises but *the way we argue from a given starting point*. Logic is not about whether our premises are true, i.e. match up to the world, but about whether our inferences really do support our conclusions once the premises are granted. It is in this sense that logic is concerned with the 'internal cogency' of our reasoning. (Smith, 2013, p. 2)
22 The specific content of the premise and the conclusion is not relevant to the determination of the validity of the arguments. Not only do you not need to know the actual truth-value of the premises and conclusions of an argument to determine its validity you do not even need to know what they mean. (Newton-Smith, 1985, p. 7)

exclusively associated with the individual premises and conclusion that constitute an argument and not its form.

Therefore, there is a distinction between the logical form of an argument and the truth-value of each of the premises and conclusion. In other words, knowing the truth-value of the premises and conclusion would not contribute in telling us anything about the validity of an argument except in one notable case. This is when you have true premises and a false conclusion. In this case the argument would be invalid. In all the other combination of cases knowing the truth-value of the premises and conclusion would not tell us anything about its validity. The exceptional case whose validity depends on its truth-value is representative of the law of non-contradiction. To appreciate this all one has to do is accept the premises of any given argument as true and deny its conclusion. This would lead to an implicit contradiction. Consequently, this would imply that there is at least one inference which is *necessarily* true without the support of any further evidence. This inference, namely the law of non-contradiction, serves as one of the more fundamental ways in determining whether the form of an argument is logically consistent. If the form of an argument denies the law of non-contradiction then its structure cannot be a logically consistent one.

An alternative way to understand my point is by taking any given argument which comprises of a conclusion (a proposition) and reasons (premises) to support that conclusion. When we usually think of arguments of this kind we would, quite naturally, assume that the minimum reasons required to support a conclusion can be no less than one. However, this is not the case. The answer is none. This means that there can be a conclusion which stands completely on its own; independent of reasons that support it. This would, of course, defy the very construct of an argument because it fails to present any reasons in support of the purported conclusion. Nevertheless, when such conclusions are taken independently, without the support of reasons, it implies that nothing goes against the conclusion and therefore it can be upheld without any reasons. This sort of conclusion is referred to as a self-evident truth.

One of the most common self-evident truths is known as the law of non-contradiction. It simply states that it cannot be the case that something is both the case and not the case at the same time. Such a truth is, and has been since the days of Aristotle, considered to be so glaring obvious that it does not to require anything to support it. More pertinently, it is considered as a kind of truth which has no opposing reasons to reject it or even call its authenticity into question. This means *everything* supports it while *nothing* contradicts it. Modus Ponens and Modus Tollens are clear examples of this. The validity of such argument-forms serve as basic inferential rules of classical logic that are representative of the fundamental laws of logic. The validity of both these argument-forms are just as fundamental as the laws of logic that they stand for. Additionally, if the conditional premises that make up the forms of these arguments are true then their conclusion cannot be otherwise. So given that the forms of these arguments are clear representations of the laws of logic their validity is certain. This qualifies the law of non-contradiction and the law of excluded middle as self-evident truths that must always be true and cannot be false.

Therefore, subscribing to the laws of logic would mean that I hold them to be *true*. In such a case I would declare that a contradiction must always be *false* and a tautology must always be *true*. My acceptance of these fundamental axioms would then demand that I accept the outcome of whatever inferentially follows from these axioms. Accepting the laws of logic to be true while denying the conclusion would result in an explicit contradiction. Thus, it would mean that my presumption of logic presupposes a notion of truth (and falsehood). The corollary of what I have drawn on so far establishes the distinction between logic and truth. Moreover, it manifests how logic presupposes truth in a fundamental way. Consequently, for logic to be able to make sense of things, particularly within the tradition of analytic philosophy, it would have to subscribe to a notion of truth.

(ii) Substantive and/or insubstantive theories of truth

Matters of truth occupy an indispensible position within philosophical discourse. While the notion of truth possesses a ubiquitous nature that pervades almost every aspect of what constitutes our ordinary lives, it appears to bear a special relationship with philosophy. The significance of such a connection would primarily include potency on the part of truth in being able to determine the soundness of philosophical conclusions. Deliberations centred in and around matters of truth would, in this regard, act as determining factors as to how one goes about practicing and engaging with philosophy. It would actively constitute and fall within the remit of meta-philosophy which is responsible for shaping the very methods by which one philosophises. In this respect, truth deserves serious intellectual attention, especially if it has the potential in fundamentally influencing the consequences we strive to reach by way of philosophical argumentation. Trakakis (2013) makes an apt reference to John Sallis in this regard where he notes that "It is not as though philosophy is first delimited as such and then brought to bear on the question of truth; rather, the way in which the question of truth is addressed, the way in which truth is determined as such, determines the very project of philosophy." (Trakakis, 2013, p. 367)

There is an extensive range of truth theories within philosophical literature. I wish to focus on two of the broader types of truth that have received considerable attention within the purview of analytic philosophy[23], namely substantive and insubstantive theories of

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23 Analytic philosophy in the twentieth century, from its realist beginnings with Frege, Russell and Moore and its attempts during the logical positivist period to demarcate science from metaphysics, to its contemporary attraction for naturalism and scientific realism, illustrates the permanent appeal of talk in terms of truth and associated notions such as correspondence or verification. A major, and striking, difference between this tradition and the tradition known as "Continental philosophy" is that analytic philosophers have devoted a lot of effort to trying to account for the meaning of the simple word "true", and to discuss the various possible "theories of truth". They want to know what it means to say that our theories of the world are true, and whether they can be said to be so. They do not doubt that philosophers can play a major role in elucidating this. So they have investigated whether truth can be defined as correspondence between our statements and reality, or whether it could be defined as a form of coherence between our statements, or whether it can be defined, in the pragmatic sense, as a way of saying that a statement is useful or beneficial. In fact most of the history of twentieth-century analytic philosophy is a sort of battlefield opposing various "realist" and "anti-realist" conceptions of truth. (Engel, 2002, p. 4)

truth. To be more specific, I shall consider correspondence theories and deflationary theories of truth that are types of substantive and insubstantive theories respectively. Although each of these types of truth theories are further divided up into specific subcategories, I will not engage with those. For the purpose of my argument, it shall suffice to consider the correspondence and deflationary theories in their generic sense which would be inclusive of their subcategories.

The correspondence theories of truth are founded upon the central idea that truth is a relational property. This relational property is one that something has in virtue of its relationship to something else. It functions as a conjunctive between two or more entities. A correspondence between a claim on the one hand and the way reality is perceived on the other is what amounts to truth. In other words, when a successful correspondence occurs between a given claim and reality it would result in truth. Conversely, the absence of correspondence would result in falsity. In both cases the truth and falsity would be substantive truth-values. Take for instance my claim that 'snow is white'. If it turns out that the world we live in is such, manifesting at least one instant, where snow is actually white then my claim will be true. This would mean that reality substantiates my claim about the whiteness of snow. As a result of this there will be a correspondence relation between my claim and the actual colour of snow. On the contrary, if the world was different and the reality of snow was to exhibit a colour other than white while there were zero instances of snow being white, then my claim will be false. This would mean that reality substantiates my claim about the non-whiteness of snow. The claim itself will still be a substantive claim. This is because the way in which I have arrived at the falsity of this particular matter is one which is substantive. The determining factor as to whether a claim would either be true or false is grounded in the existence or non-existence of a correspondence relation between the claim and reality.

It is worth noting that in such a case my claim cannot enjoy a truth-value without having been substantiated by how the world actually is or is not. My claim and even the mere thought of snow being white would not possess the causal efficacy in determining the reality of snow to be or not to be that colour even if it already is that colour. Instead, the determining factor with respect to the colour of snow lies with the reality of snow itself and not with my conception of it. This implies that the contents of our thoughts are true in virtue of a mind-independent reality. To put it slightly differently, it infers that the contents of our thoughts cannot be deemed true or false in virtue of a mind-dependent reality. Engel (2002) sums up this idea of correspondence and the idea of realism in the following manner:

> A correspondence conception of truth is often called a *realist* conception in the following sense: it says that our thoughts are true *in virtue* of something that is distinct from them, and independent from our thinking and knowing of them. In this sense, the truth of a statement is also supposed to *transcend* our possible knowledge of it, or its verification. In opposition, we may call *anti-realist* any conception of truth according to which truth does not transcend our cognitive powers, and is constrained by some epistemic condition. (Engel, 2002, p. 14-15)

A realist outlook in matters of epistemology is indicative of a correspondence notion of truth[24]. It holds that our conceptions and expressions of a mind-independent reality are true in virtue of bearing a correspondence relation. If such a relation between the mind and the world cannot be determined to be or not to be the case in any robust way then truth would be a metaphysically vacuous notion. In this sense, truth would be a mere logical devise that would make generalizations over an infinite number of propositions. This is a view which deflationary theorists subscribe to.

Deflationary theories, in contrast to correspondence theories, take a very different approach. For the deflationist truth is not a genuine property. Nor does it possess any substantive or robust metaphysics which allows it go beyond the semantics of what is being asserted. This means that truth has no real underlying nature that is grounded in reality. Instead, truth is a logical devise which does not amount to anything more than a relation between two logical forms. This is usually expressed by way of the equivalence principle, i.e. *X is true iff X.* Take for example my claim that 'grass is green'. This claim would be true on account of the deflationary theorist, if and only if the grass is green. Saying 'it is true that the grass is green' would not be any different to merely saying 'grass is green'. The former assertion can be deflated to the latter without the loss of meaning since they are considered to be logically equivalent. In light of this, the deflationary theory of truth can be understood in virtue of two components. These include a metaphysical and logical component respectively. The metaphysical component asserts that truth has no substantive nature or relational property. The logical[25] component asserts that the equivalence principle is sufficient in order to account for the truth-value of a given predicate.

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24 ... I want to explain why I call this a realist conception. Though 'realism' is more commonly used for one or another metaphysical position, I find it appropriate to call this conception of truth 'realist'. The reason is this. What it takes to render a statement true is something that is objective vis-à-vis that statement, namely, a fact involving what the statement is about. The truth value of the statement depends on how it is with "the world" "beyond" the statement rather than on some feature of the statement itself. In particular, and looking forward to the main competitor of the realist conception, truth value does not depend on the epistemic status of the statement, whether it is justified, warranted, counts as an expression of knowledge, or coheres with some system or other. (Alston, 2001, p. 41-42)

25 Deflationists are, however, typically committed to three theses about the phrase "is true," usually called the natural language *truth predicate*. (That label also covers the phrase's synonyms "holds" and "is so" and "is the case," along with corresponding expressions in other languages.) – *First*, applying the truth predicate to something is equivalent to just saying it. One version of this *equivalence principle* is embodied in Tarski's T-scheme, but there are others. Different deflationists, besides holding different views on whether the "something" in question should be taken to be a sentence or a proposition, give different accounts of what the "equivalence" here amounts to. – *Second*, the equivalence principle is a sufficient account of the meaning of the truth predicate. There is nothing more to understanding the truth predicate than recognizing the equivalence principle, and that by itself ultimately suffices to account for our usage of the predicate and its utility. Different deflationists give different accounts of what the "recognition" here amounts to. – *Third*, an account of the meaning of "true" is a sufficient account of the nature of truth. There is nothing to be said about what it is for something to be true once one has said what it means to call something true. Commitment to this last thesis is implicit in the practice of the typical deflationist, who begins by promising an account of the nature of truth (often quoting Pilate's question), but in the end offers only an account of the meaning of "true." Explicit enunciation of the principle is less common. (Burgess and Burgess, 2011, p. 33-34)

The T-Schema

It is conventionally assumed that both of these theories of truth and any other satisfactory account of truth would accept all instances of the T-schema[26]. One way to express the T-schema is as follows:

$T\langle\alpha\rangle \leftrightarrow \alpha$ It is true that α if and only if α.

The biconditional plays a crucial role in the T-schema. The biconditional expresses a specific kind of logical connective. For any variables A and B, $A \leftrightarrow B$ is true whenever A and B have the same truth-value. An alternative way to think about the biconditional is by acknowledging the conjunction of two conditionals such as $A \leftrightarrow B$ that can equally be defined as $(A \rightarrow B) \wedge (B \rightarrow A)$. In the case of a valid biconditional we have what is called 'equivalence'. The variables A and B would qualify as being logically equivalent when they both share the same truth-value under every interpretation. In light of this, the T-schema manifests a logical equivalence (of form and meaning) between the variables that are posited on both sides of the biconditional arrow. The loss of equivalence would sever the reciprocal association between the variables at the most primitive level. Consequently, any basic account which attempts to offer an adequate theory or definition of truth would suffer from a logical in-equivalence. This means that the theory would stand in conceptual isolation while failing to draw a basic logical connection between any two posited variables.

The T-schema is adopted by both the correspondence[27] and deflationary[28] theories of truth. However, there is a crucial difference as to how advocates of each of these truth theories construe the T-schema. For the correspondence theorist the T-schema is construed in realist terms. In this sense whatever is posited by the variable on the left hand side of the biconditional bears an equivalence, namely a specific type of correspondence, with that posited by the variable on the right hand side of the bionditional. This correspondence relation is what binds both these variables that stand in for an assertion and how the world actually is in reality respectively. Thus, the T-schema $T\langle\alpha\rangle \leftrightarrow \alpha$ on this account will

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26 It is widely assumed that any satisfactory account of truth has to accept all (or nearly all) instances of the following truth schema (T-schema short): it is true that p if and only if p' or, in another formulation, the proposition that p is true if and only if p. One may even argue that the schema crucial to our common notion of truth that to have the correct grasp of the later means to endorse the schema and its various instances as primitively compelling, as holding in virtue of the concepts involved, and thus knowable a priori. Hence any argument showing the incompatibility of a given account of truth with the schema would be damaging for the account in question. (Szubka, 2003, p. 93)

27 Concerning the Tarskian idea, it is common to talk about the "semantic theory of truth". Which notion of truth underlies the T-schema? Scholars have discussing for decades on the issue whether Tarksi's is a correspondence conception of truth in which, roughly, a sentence is true iff it corresponds to facts, to how things actually are in the world. In the opening notes of '*The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages*' Tarski maintains that the idea according to which "a true sentence is one which says that the affairs is so and so, and the state of affairs indeed is so and so" expresses "the classical view of truth". (Berto, 2007, p. 17)

28 On the contrary, it is claimed that the schema has precisely the advantage of providing a guiding principle for the specification of the truth conditions without employing heavy theoretical or metaphysical commitments. (Berto, 2007, p. 17)

be construed as: the assertion 'snow is white' is true if and only if snow is white in reality. For the deflationary theorists, on the other hand, the T-schema is construed as a mere logical connective which bears no metaphysical foundation. In this sense to assert that α is true if and only if α would be neither to say anymore nor any less than just that. It would be nothing more than a semantic equivalence. Thus, the T-schema $T\langle\alpha\rangle \leftrightarrow \alpha$ on this account will be construed as: the assertion 'it is true that snow is white' if and only if 'snow is white'. Both assertions on either side of the biconditional would bear nothing more than a logical equivalence despite the additional phrase 'it is true that' posited on the left hand side of the biconditional.

As a result of these different ways in which the T-schema is construed, the correspondence account falls under the broader category of substantive truth theories, while the deflationary account falls under the category of insubstantive truth theories. Sher (2016) describes substantivism as

> ... a general philosophical methodology advocating a substantive approach to philosophical theorizing. "Substantive" is largely understood in the ordinary sense of the word, which includes such traits as "important," "significant," "deep," "interesting," "informative," "explanatory," "rigorous," "precise," "accurate," "thorough," and "subject to demanding norms of inquiry and justification." Substantivism encompasses both the subject-matter of philosophical theorizing and the theorizing itself. (Sher, 2016, p. 818)

When substantivism, characterised in this way, is applied to the notion of truth it purports a positive methodology that allows scope for serious philosophical investigation. It does this primarily by offering meaningful content about things that are firmly entrenched in a mind-independently reality. This meaningful content has an underlying nature that is grounded in such a reality. This is essentially what saves it from being trivial and metaphysically transparent. Consequently, substantive truth theories provide significant explanatory power to various phenomena in ways that are constructive. It is precisely how theories of this category methodologically go about making sense of things. In contrast, the insubstantive truth theories are devoid of such elements. Sher (2016) has summed these up. Nevertheless, for our purposes it is sufficient to say that insubstantive theories seem to be conceptually satisfied with subscribing to a trivial notion of truth which is metaphysically transparent[29]. This means there is nothing beyond a logical property of any truth or falsehood. Truth and falsehood in this sense does not have an underlying nature. Despite the obvious criticisms levelled against insubstantive truth theories, their metaphysical transparency and trivialist conception of truth (regardless of how peculiar it may appear) is still a way of making sense of things. It is still a truth theory which conforms to instances of the T-schema and provides a particular understanding of truth.

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29 ... the best way of characterizing deflationism's metaphysical commitments is to say that according to deflationism, truth is a metaphysically transparent property. Metaphysically transparent properties have no underlying nature that isn't revealed in our grasp of the concept; grasping the relevant concept tells us the whole, or real essence of the property. (Lynch, 2009, p. 116)

2. Applying both of these assumptions in making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam would result in a paradox (of ineffability).

I have spend the first section of this essay drawing on how analytic philosophy typically assumes the laws of logic and substantive or insubstantive theories of truth in making sense of things. In doing so, I have established that both of these assumptions play a crucial role for analytic philosophy to be able to make making sense of things in a particular way. I shall now demonstrate how the application of both these assumptions would fail in making sense of an absolutely ineffable God of Islam. I shall argue that the consequence which ensues from this failure is a paradox of ineffability. In order to achieve this I shall begin by providing what I take to be an absolute ineffable view of God in the Islamic tradition. Subsequently, I shall demonstrate how the laws of logic and the two generic types of truth theories fail in making sense of this particular notion of God.

Absolute ineffable view of God in the Islamic tradition

The particular view of an Islamic God that I shall adopt is one that I borrow from the erudite and illustrious 12th century Islamic theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111). As Watt (2014) notably points out, al-Ghazālī was a prime exponent of Abū ʿl-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī's (d. 935)[30] theological views. From among al-Ghazālī's theological views regarding God, here is an excerpt that bears a significant relevance to the specific notion of God that I shall adopt:

> God does not inhere in anything, and nothing inheres in Him. He is exalted above being contained by space, and too holy to be bounded by time; on the contrary, He existed before He created time and space. He now has [the attributes] by which He was [previously characterized], and is distinguished from His creatures by His attributes. There is not in His essence what is other than He, nor in what is other than He is there [anything of] His essence. He is exalted above change [of state] and movement. Originated things do not inhere [or subsist] in Him, and accidental [events] do not befall Him. Rather, He does not cease; through the qualities of His majesty He is beyond cessation, and through the attributes of His perfection He is independent of [or does not require] any further increase of perfection. (al-Ghazālī translated by Watt in Renard, 2014, p. 110)

The distinguishing feature which sits at the heart of al-Ghazālī's belief of God is that He is unknowable[31]. Although one may be able to detect subtle sentiments that are indicative of unknowability from the excerpt above, I find that Burrell (1987) has expressed this in a more evident manner.

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30 Al-Ash'ari was born at Basrah. Regarding his date of birth there is difference of opinion. Ibn Khallikan, in his discussion of the life of al-Ash'ari, mentions that he was born in 260 or 270/873 or 883 and died at Baghdad in 330/941 or some time after that. According to Shibli Nu'mani and ibn `Asakir (the author of *Tabyin Kidhb al-Muftari,* on the life and teachings of al-Ash'ari), he was born in 270/873 and died in 330/941. He was buried between Karkh and Bab al-Basrah (the gate of Basrah). He was a descendant of abu Musa al-Ash'ari, one, of the famous Companions of the Prophet. (M.M. Sharif, 1963, p. 222-223)

31 See Fadlou Shehadi's Ghazali's Unique Unknowable God (1964)

> Given the fact that "God is a being necessarily existing of Himself (*al-mawjud al-wajib al-wu-jud bi-dhatihi*)" (*Maqsad* 47, M 342–43), it should be clear that this "peculiar divine property belongs only to God and only God knows it." Moreover "it is inconceivable that anyone know it save Him or one who is His like, since He has no like, no other knows it." On such an account, "only God knows God" (*ibid.*). So the resources of philosophy confirm God's uniqueness or *tawhid*: the utter distinction of the One from all else: "everything the exercise of which is possible," which does in fact exist from that One "according to the best ways of order and perfection" (*Maqsad* 47, M 342). (Burrell, 1987, p. 181)

In light of both these excerpts; I shall assert that God transcends all human conceptions of time, space, categories, and our cognitive and linguistic capacities. God is therefore believed to be absolutely transcendent. As a result of such absolute transcendence, I shall infer that in the Islamic tradition[32], God is *absolutely* ineffable. The absolute ineffability that I have in mind is a radical type which eludes all thought and articulation of God. In this sense God would be incomprehensible and inexpressible. Let us term these as conceptual and semantic ineffability sequentially. By conceptual ineffability I mean logically inconceivable and by semantic ineffability I mean linguistically inexpressible. Combining these two types of ineffability would qualify it with an absoluteness that allows us to distinguish it from weaker forms of ineffability. Weaker forms in ineffability are types that would be inclined to making some form of concession. This would include granting an ability to either conceive or express a notion of God or both in order to avoid the paradoxical scenario it gives rise to[33].

Furthermore, it is worth pointing out that I do not ascribe absolute ineffability to the Islamic God because He is devoid of divine attributes or properties. Al-Ghazālī has clearly affirmed the existence of God's attributes in the above excerpt. He insinuates that God's attributes are different (in-kind as opposed to in-degree) and unlimited as well as perfect. It would follow that God is absolutely ineffable on the grounds that His attributes are unfathomable whereby we are unable to conceive and subsequently express them. More importantly, it would be incorrect to uphold the view that God is absolutely ineffable exclusively on the grounds that He has no attributes that can be predicated to Him. In this case the non-existence of attributes would leave no room for them to be conceptually and semantically ineffable. Consequently, saying nothing about God would still, bizarrely, express all that there is; only because there is nothing. Thus, Kukla (2005) on this matter has expressed that such an understanding has nothing to do with ineffability.

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32 It should be noted that I do not intend to speak for the whole of the Islamic tradition.

33 See Hick (2000). – The most notable reply to Alston's arguments comes from John Hick. As a part of his pluralist hypothesis, Hick maintains that the Real, which shows itself in religious or mystic experiences across cultures, is ineffable and can only be grasped in categories shaped by our respective cultures and traditions. So, if a Christian mystic experiences a personal God while Buddhists experience the non-personal state of nirvana, there is no actual contradiction, since the contradictory predicates only apply to the various personae of the Real, not to the Real itself. The Real itself is beyond the categories of human thought and is, therefore, ineffable; our predicates do not apply to it. Hick, being aware of the problems this claim implies, tries to avoid the paradox of ineffability by making a distinction between formal and substantial predicates.7 Formal predicates tell us nothing about what the Real is like in itself, substantial predicates do. If, e.g. I say about the Real that it is a possible object of reference, then this is just a formal predicate, while saying that it is a person is a substantial predicate. (Gäb, 2017, p. 3)

Laws of logic

Let us first approach this particular notion of God from a logical perspective. This would involve adhering to the fundamental laws of logic. Adhering to the laws of logic would, to a certain degree, intellectually compel me by way of logical necessity to admit that a contradiction must always be *false* and a tautology must always be *true*. If I attempt to resist this claim it would defy the very laws of logic. Thus, these axiomatic statements would act as conceptual methods by which analytic philosophy would attempt to make sense of an ineffable God. However, this would hardly prove to be successful. Let me explain why. Take the claim 'God is ineffable'. If God is ineffable, as the claim asserts, then He cannot be conceived of and nor spoken of. Any conception of God and articulation of this conception would render Him effable (describable). The claim, nonetheless, explicitly asserts that God is ineffable (indescribable). This claim is an articulation of a concept; an expression of a thought about an ineffable God. It means that the very claim itself, namely 'God is ineffable' would necessarily imply that He is effable and if He is effable then He is not ineffable. Consequently, the claim 'God is ineffable', though it anticipates expressing that God is indescribable by way of stating He is ineffable, does so at the cost of describing God. This is a self-defeating claim which manifests an evident contradiction. The implication of a contradiction would deem the claim to be necessarily false. I shall call this the paradox of ineffability.

A paradox can be understood as an argument which appears to offer true premises on the grounds of correct reasoning that sequentially lead on to a false conclusion[34]. This is how Sainsbury understands a paradox,

> ... an apparently unacceptable conclusion derived by apparently acceptable reasoning from apparently acceptable premises. Appearances have to deceive, since the acceptable cannot lead by acceptable steps to the unacceptable. So, generally, we have a choice: either the conclusion is not really unacceptable, or else the starting point, or the reasoning, has some non-obvious flaw. (Sainsbury, 2009, p. 1)

This understanding reflects in some way as to why I have chosen to express the claim 'God is ineffable' as a paradox. Primarily, it is due to its inherent conflicting nature. The claim attempts to communicate the indescribability of God at the cost of describing Him. Apparently this claim reveals something which, without deeper inspection, seems to say what God cannot be by using a negative prefix, namely, 'in-effable'. This may appear acceptable on the condition that it has been arrived at by apparently acceptable premises. However, what it eventually implies is unacceptable. The semantic implication of the term 'ineffability' infers a direct inconsistency with the claim that is used to communicate it. Therefore, we are left with a claim which fails to assert what it intends simply because it unavoidably does what it says cannot be done.

This conceptual dilemma has led many theologians to resort to the apophatic tradition. One of the obvious reasons as to why practitioners of the apophatic method (negative theology) have sought this alternative is to minimise violating the absolute ineffability of God. Restricting themselves to negative claims about what-God-is-*not* may help circum-

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34 See Olin (2003)

vent anthropomorphic attributions to an ineffable God. Of course this approach might appear to be less prone to the kinds of anthropomorphic issues that arise with positive claims; however, they are not any different when it comes to matters of absolute ineffability. Saying what God is not would not be any different to saying what He is when it comes to matters of absolute ineffability. A negative claim would still be a propositional claim despite inferring what-is-not-the-case. Therefore, negative claims about an ineffable God would be no less different in resulting in a contradiction than positive claims since they are both inferring something by way of predication.

Prior to discussing the truth-value of such a contradictory claim, it is worth focussing on the logical contradiction that stems from it. There are a few ways in which a contradiction has been characterised. Grim (2004) has accumulated and assorted nineteen of these characterisations into four overarching types. These include pragmatic, metaphysical, semantic, and syntactic types. I shall briefly explain each of these types and demonstrate how they construe the claim 'God is ineffable'. Thereafter, I shall select one of these types of contradiction that I shall work with.

Pragmatic: This type of contradiction can be formally expressed in the following two ways

$\neg\,(\vdash_x \alpha \,\wedge\, \vdash_x \neg\alpha)$ It is not the case that (Rational agent) x accepts/asserts both α and $\neg\alpha$

$\neg\,(\vdash_x \alpha \,\wedge\, \dashv_x \alpha)$ It is not the case that (Rational agent) x both accepts/asserts and rejects/denies α

This approach to contradictions tends to focus on assertion and denial. It represents Aristotle's characterisation of what he thought a contradiction was in a particular way[35]. In Aristotle's *On Interpretations* he provides a very straightforward definition of a contradiction by stating that it is a couple of propositions that consist of an affirmation and denial. This needn't mean you always have to have two propositions to result in this type of contradiction. You can have one proposition which expresses an affirmation and denial. Much like the claim 'God is ineffable'. In this case we have an affirmation and denial of the same claim. The claim affirms the ineffability of God while denying it by implying that He is effable. The main distinction of this type of contradiction from the ones that follow is that it draws on the acts of affirmation and denial instead of other aspects such as states of affairs, falsity, and form.

Metaphysical: This type of contradiction specifically bears ontological implications. It can be formally expressed in the following way

$\forall x\,\forall F\,\neg\,(F\,(x)\;\neg F\,(x))$ The same object cannot both have and not have the same property

This approach to a contradiction is not concerned with single or a pair of statements or propositions. It rather focuses on a state of affairs. If a state of affairs is contradictory it would be the kind which possess and lacks a particular kind of property at the same time. This type of contradiction seems to be a closer variant of what Aristotle proposed in his

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35 In Aristotle's words: It is impossible for any one to believe the same thing to be and not to be, as some think like Heraclitus says. (Met. 1005b23-5)

characterisation of a contradiction[36]. More specifically, it appears to relate to his concise version of the law of non-contradiction in which he stated "A thing cannot at the same time be and not be" (Met. 996b29-30). The ontological implications of this version are more apparently communicated than alternative interpretations. It denies the ontological status of properties that both exist and do not exist. The implication of this type of contradiction can be appreciated in virtue of the claim 'God is ineffable'. In this particular context, this claim infers that God cannot be described by way of attributing any property to Him while having attributed some property to Him. The ontological version of contradiction would thus imply that no 'being' can instantiate and not instantiate properties. It would thus rule out the existence of any such contradictory properties altogether.

Semantic: This type of contradiction can be formally expressed in the following ways

$\neg (T ([\alpha]) \wedge F ([\alpha]))$ The same sentence cannot both be true and false

$\neg (T ([\alpha]) \wedge T ([\alpha]))$ A sentence and its negation cannot both be true

$\neg (T ([\alpha]) \wedge \neg T ([\alpha]))$ The same sentence cannot be both true and untrue

This approach to a contradiction uses presupposed notions of truth and falsity (a type of truth theory) to infer the falsity of all contradictions. Although, this is a common feature of the law of non-contradiction, it is specifically expressed in this type as opposed to others. In the other types of contractions, being false may be seen as a corollary while focussing on more salient, such as the assertion and denial, state of affairs, and form. In this type, however, manifesting the falsity of a contradiction is a primary goal. Moreover, it resonates with Aristotle's view on contradiction where he asserts that "The most indisputable of all beliefs is that contradictory statements are not at the same time true" (Met. 1011b13-4).

An alternative way to apprehend a contradiction of this kind would be to identify it with a negation of a tautology[37]. The truth of a tautology is determined by its form and cannot be false. It is a formula that cannot be false in all possible interpretations of its propositional variables. Therefore, its negation would result in a contradiction. In this context, the claim 'God is ineffable' is a contradiction and therefore false. It bears an inherent contradiction which cannot possibly be true.

Syntactic: This type of contradiction can be formally expressed in the following way

$\neg (\alpha \wedge \neg \alpha)$ It cannot be the case that α and not α

This approach to a contradiction is probably the most common type in which Aristotle's characterisations of contradictions are conceived. It specifically characterises contradictions in virtue of form. This particular type involves a common definition of a contradiction[38],

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36 The same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject in the same respect; we must presuppose, in the face of dialectical objections, any further qualifications which might be added. (Met. 1005b19-2)

37 C10 This case is called a *contradiction*; a formula of this kind is always false. We obtain such formulas by taking the negation of a tautology. (Hans Reichenbach (1947: 36)) – C11 A statement form which is false for all possible truth values of its statement letters is called a contradiction. (Elliot Mendelson (1964: 18))

38 C7 Contradiction: Wff∗ of the form 'A & ~A'; statement of the form 'A and not A'. (Susan Haack (1978: 244)) – C8 ... two formulae are *explicitly contradictory* if and only if one is of the form q and the other of the form _~q_, that is, if one is the negation of the other. (Graeme Forbes (1994: 102)) – C9 A contradiction consists of a pair of sentences, one of which is the negation of the other. (Kalish, Montague, and Mar (1980: 18))

namely, "that a contradiction is of the form 'A & ∼A' or 'A and not A'" (Grim, 2004, p. 53). It focuses, more generically, on the syntactic structure of claims. If a claim, such as 'God is ineffable' expresses an affirmation and denial of a thing then its structure cannot be a valid one with respect to the law of non-contradiction. The syntactic structure of the claim 'God is ineffable' is one that has the following from: $F(\alpha) \wedge \neg F(\alpha)$ which in virtue of our claim we could read that God has the property of ineffability and does not have the property of ineffability. As a result of denying the law of non-contradiction this claim would be deemed invalid.

Given that the syntactic type of contradiction is specifically characterises contradictions in virtue of form, it is the type that I shall adopt. The reason for this is twofold. The first is that it closely resembles the distinction that I drew earlier on between logic and truth. The distinction was primarily focussed on how logic is more concerned with form than truth. The second is that this type is a common way in which contradictions are understood. This would allow it to be inclusive of all the other types of contradictions.

Each type of contradiction construes the claim 'God is ineffable' differently. Despite this, it is slightly difficult to consider each of these implications in complete isolation. Considering anyone of these implications would evidently assume others – some may prove to be more obvious than others. Nonetheless, one thing seems apparent in virtue of these four types of contradictions. That is the claim 'God is ineffable' suffers from different types of implications due to the variation of how a contradiction can be understood. More importantly, these implications are considered highly problematic and thus, according to classical logic, are to be avoided at all costs. They are to be avoided for a few particular reasons. Priest (2004) has summed these up into five objections that are commonly raised against contradictions. They, for the most part, serve to be reasons for why we ought to avoid them. There are as follows:

1. Contradictions entail everything.
2. Contradictions can't be true.
3. Contradictions can't be believed rationally.
4. If contradictions were acceptable, people could never be rationally criticized.
5. If contradictions were acceptable, no one could deny anything.   (Priest, 2004, p. 23)

If contradictions occur, then by the standards of classical logic, they would contribute in eliminating our conceptual ability to be rational. In such cases, we would be left to deal with antithetical matters of rationality such as inconsistencies, or as Davidson puts it, "a mental process or state—a rational process or state—gone wrong" (Davidson, 2004, p. 169). Thus, a-rationality or irrationality would prevent us from being able to make sense of the things in ways that are cognitively satisfying. Although each of these objections has the potential to be addressed in virtue of paraconsistent logics[39], my concern is with classical logic. According to classical logic these objections hold against contradictions. It follows from this that the claim 'God is ineffable', which is a contradictory claim, would encounter the same objections. It would do so on the grounds of defying the law of non-contradiction in particular. This would imply that:

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39 See Priest (2004) What's So Bad About Contradictions?

1. 'God is ineffable' entails everything.
2. 'God is ineffable' can't be true.
3. 'God is ineffable' can't be believed rationally.
4. If 'God is ineffable' were acceptable, people could never be rationally criticized.
5. If 'God is ineffable' were acceptable, no one could deny anything.

I have exchanged the term 'contradictions' with the claim 'God is ineffable'. This is because the claim 'God is ineffable' *is* a contradictory one that allows it to stand in for the term 'contradiction'. This is because, in this context, they both share the same meaning. Accordingly, the consequences that ensue from the term 'contradictions' would equally ensue from the claim 'God is ineffable'. In order to avoid such consequences it would only be conceptually adequate to deny contradictory claims such as 'God is ineffable'. This is what appears to be the essential role of the law of non-contradiction. It seeks to bar contradictions. However, contradictions come in different forms as I have illustrated. For each form of contradiction there would have to be a corresponding type of barring mechanism. In terms of the type of barring mechanism for the syntactic form of contradiction we would say that contradictions cannot be *sensibly* asserted. This would mean that the claim such as 'God is ineffable' fails to make sense in a way which is cognitively satisfying. It evidently puts the ineffability claim at direct odds with the laws of logic. Both of which, in this case, would prove to be mutually exclusive. Any attempt to make sense of the absolute ineffability of God would result in an obvious case of irrationality. Moreover, this particular issue concerning a contradiction by way of its logical form is a "problem of self-refutation that Alston highlighted has been noticed by other philosophers and, for example, is referred to by Leszek Kołakowski as a 'self-reference antinomy' (Metaphysical Horror 44) and by David E. Cooper as a 'paradox of ineffability' ('Ineffability and Religious Experience' 193)" (Hunter, 2015, p. 490).

Substantive truth

Let us now turn to the truth-value of contradictory claims. Classical logic tells us that all contradictions are false. This would mean that the claim 'God is ineffable' is also false. The truth-value assigned to this contradiction, namely falseness, would either be substantive or insubstantive. If this contradictory claim is false in virtue of a substantive theory such as a correspondence theory of truth, then it would mean that there is an unsuccessful correspondence relation between the claim 'God is ineffable' and the way in which reality is perceived in virtue of that claim. Given that it is determinable, namely, whether there is, or is not, a correspondence relation between the claim 'God is ineffable' and reality implies that the truth-value is substantive. This means that if we are able to determine that there is a correspondence relation between the claim and reality then its truth-value, being true, would be a substantive truth-value. Alternatively, if we are able to determine that that there is no correspondence relation between the claim and reality then its truth-value, being false, would equally be a substantive truth-value.

If the truth-value of the claim 'God is ineffable' can be determined in a substantive way then it would imply that God is *not* ineffable. This can be understood in light of the

T-schema. The T-schema would manifest a logical equivalence, in this case, between the claim and reality. It would grant the ability to be able to determine whether or not there is, or is not, a correspondence equivalence between the claim 'God is ineffable' and reality. Regardless of the truth-value which ensues from this, it implies, at the very least, that it is logically conceivable/possible in determining a substantive truth-value about the claim 'God is ineffable'. This would mean that the substantive truth-value is one which bears *meaningful* content about an absolutely ineffable God. This meaningful content would have an underlying nature that is firmly entrenched in a mind-independent reality. Moreover, we would have epistemic access to this mind-independent reality. As a result of which we would have the cognitive ability to make sense of the underlying nature of God's ineffability. This would refute the notion of God being conceptually ineffable.

Insubstantive truth

If the truth-value assigned to the contradictory claim 'God is ineffable' is false in virtue of an insubstantive theory of truth, such as a type of deflationary theory, then the outcome would be different. In this case the falseness of the claim would not posit any genuine property. It would not have any underlying nature that is grounded in reality. Instead it would be a mere devise which manifests a logical function. As a result of this, the claim would be metaphysically transparent and trivial. This is not because its truth-value is false but rather it is due to the insubstantive nature of this truth theory. For argument sake, even if the truth-value was true, the metaphysical component of this truth theory would divest it of a substantive nature. It would not be anything more than an expression of a logical component which merely asserts the equivalence principle. The claim 'God is ineffable' would be deflated in a way which confines it to expressing nothing more than a semantic equivalence of itself.

This can be appreciated in light of the T-schema. Deflationists seemingly appear to be more closely associated to the T-schema than opposing theories[40]. One of the key reasons for this is that deflationists, despite their differences on many matters, subscribe to the T-schema at face value. They don't find the need to provide underlying metaphysical interpretations to the T-schema in being able to understand it anymore than what it is apparently expressing. Most would agree that a theory of truth needn't be any more informative than the equivalence that entails from the T-schema[41]. In light of this, the contradictory claim would be considered false by way of the T-schema in the following manner: 'It is false that God is ineffable' *iff* God is not ineffable. Both assertions on either side of the biconditional express a negative logical equivalence. The additional phrase situated on the left-hand side of the biconditional, namely, 'it is false that' is mirrored by an equal negation situated on the right-hand side of the biconditional, namely 'not'.

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40 See footnote 27.

41 According to deflationists, "the traditional attempt to discern the *essence* of truth – to analyze that special quality which all truths supposedly have in common – is just a pseudo-problem". (Horwich, 1990: 6) There is no substantive common denominator of all truths, and therefore there is no substantive theory of truth. The task of a theory of truth is to generate a list of all instances of the Equivalence schema, and regardless of how this list is generated, the theory of truth is still a collection of trivialities. (Sher, 2006, p. 159)

Like the correspondence theories, the deflationary account of falseness (or even truth) allows for a logical conceivability/possibility in determining an insubstantive truth-value. The way in which it is determinable for the deflationists, as opposed to the correspondence theorist, is grounded in making a logical equivalence. Consequently, the truth-value of the contradictory claim 'God is ineffable' would also be determinable in virtue of making a logical equivalence. The fact that it is determinable means it grants a form of epistemic access in coming to know something about an absolutely ineffable God. Due to the metaphysical transparency and triviality of the deflationary account, it may not provide the same sort of knowing as the substantive theories do[42]. It may, in this regard, offer an impoverished type of cognitive satisfaction that is exclusively confined to logical equivalence. Nonetheless, the fact that it provides a basic logical equivalence in being able to determine what is the case from what is not negates the absolute ineffability of the God in question.

Moreover, the metaphysical transparency and triviality of the deflationist account would restrict the claim 'God is ineffable' to a nonrepresentational meaning. Metaphysical transparency would deny both the subject term 'God' and its predicate 'is ineffable' of any ontological significance. Both components would bear no grounding in reality. Triviality would deprive both components, namely, 'God' and 'is ineffable' from anything beyond a logical function. The most notable consequence of both of these concepts would be the deprivation of meaning. The implications of metaphysical transparency and triviality would bring to question the very existence of any such God under the purview analytic ontology. The name 'God' to which absolute ineffability is predicated would bear no referent. As a result of this the name 'God' would be meaningless[43]. God would no longer be susceptible to any criterion by which a truth-value can be determined. In this case the proper name 'God' which is supposed to designate a particular would be reduced to a logically proper name that is representative of egocentric or indexical words. In this context, 'God' is unknowable; His name would be a vacuous term without any meaning.

For Alston (1956), however, God cannot be unknowable. The proper name 'God' is supposed to designate a particular thought which we should be able to justify the usage of the name 'God'. This justification is achieved by being able to identify Him. The identifi-

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42 Sher (2016) notes that triviality advocates a shallow theory of truth.

43 There is nonetheless an important point to be made here which demonstrates that despite our conceptual inabilities failing to conceive of God this does not render Islamic Holy Scripture (most notably the Qur'an and Hadith) as vacuous or meaningless in any way. Here is how Burrell sums al-Ghazali's view up regarding this matter: "He insists that the names of God, licensed by the Qur'an or at least not forbidden therein, signify a reality in God, but the relevant philosophical theorems, together with the experience of 'the knowers,' warn us that we cannot comprehend how (*la bi'l-kaifa*) those features qualify divinity. So our use of these names cannot tell us anything about God (*Maqsad* 192-6). But they can function as lures for us, inviting us to become ever more merciful, compassionate, and just, thus calling us to a perfection which admits of countless degrees and unending progress. If the road of identification is closed, the journey of ever-increasing assimilation is not only open but demanded of whomever desires to come to know God. For the closer one comes, the more one experiences the difference (as 'the knowers' testify), and we can invoke God's names the more surely, the more acutely we realize that our conception of the attribute in question cannot be a sure guide to its reality in God (*Maqsad* 192-6)" (Burrell 1987, 182).

cation of God plays an integral part in determining what God is from what He's not. Failure to identify God would result in not having any reasons to name Him 'God'. According to Alston it is possible to identify God by way of ascribing certain attributes or properties to Him. This would grant some degree of recognition of God as well establishing what He is not. Alston appears to be drawing on Frege's famous maxim here, 'sense determines reference'. He does so by implying that the various attributes that we ascribe to God in being able to identify Him are representative of the sense of God. The sense of a proper name, such as 'God', ought to be one that is grasped by those who are sufficiently acquainted with language. Likewise, by those who recognise the entirety of the designators of which the proper name is a part. This would then determine the reference of God and the correct usage of the proper name. It is possible to have an expression that has a sense but no referent. However, having no sense would impede the very thought of identifying the subject in question.

God, therefore, is identifiable according to Alston. If God can be identified then He cannot be ineffable. This is because the claim 'God is ineffable' would constitute the following two conflicting ideas:

1. The subject term 'God' is taken to mean 'identifiable' and 'knowable' followed by

2. The predication 'is ineffable' which is taken to mean 'indescribable'

The contradiction is apparent. According to (2) the predication 'is ineffable' would make it impossible to predicate anything of God. If we are unable to predicate anything of God it would mean that we would be unable to identify Him. Since the ability to identify God is by way of ascribing properties to Him. This would mean that (1) the subject term 'God' cannot have a sense which determines His reference. Thus, Aslton's argument against ineffability appears to be grounded in his assertion that God is not unknowable. That is, He is identifiable by way of ascribing various attributes to Him and thus cannot be ineffable. This way Alston avoids being embroiled in a contradictory position (the paradox of ineffability), which is false. Nevertheless, this comes at the cost of claiming that God is not ineffable.

However, Alston's position is not amenable with what I have drawn on so far. Unlike Aslton's view, I have asserted that God is unidentifiable and unknowable on two specific accounts. The first is due to the Islamic notion of God that I have selected. The second is due to metaphysical transparency and triviality which stems from the deflationary account of truth. I have provided some explanation on both of these points. If God is unidentifiable and unknowable it would mean:

1. The subject term 'God' is taken to mean 'unidentifiable' and 'unknowable' followed by

2. The predication 'is ineffable' which is taken to mean 'indescribable'

From this perspective, the sentence 'God is ineffable' wouldn't appear to result in a contradiction, as it would have, if God was taken to be identifiable and knowable. Both subject term and predicate in this case would be implying the same thing. The predicate term 'God' would imply that He is unidentifiable and unknowable while the predicate 'is ineffable' would imply that He is indescribable. Despite the differences in meaning between

the terms (a) 'unidentifiable', (b) 'unknowable' and (c) 'indescribable' they all, loosely, seem to infer the ineffability of God. One way to appreciate this is by taking each of the terms to represent an equivalence of form and meaning with the subject term 'God' and its predicate 'is ineffable' such as:

God	is	Ineffable
a) The unidentifiable	is	unidentifiable
b) The unknowable	is	unknowable
c) The indescribable	is	indescribable

Each of the claims and the descriptive words which constitute them represent an equivalence of from and meaning with the sentence 'God is ineffable'. Although, the equivalence of the form is more evident than the meaning, they can still be considered to infer some aspect of ineffability as opposed to none. The logical equivalence manifested by each of the claims proves to be consistent with the T-schema $T\langle\alpha\rangle \leftrightarrow \alpha$. We can appreciate this by replacing each of the variables (α) in the T-schema with the given descriptions, such as:

$T\langle\alpha\rangle$		$\leftrightarrow$	α
a)	It is true that 'the unidentifiable' is the unidentifiable	iff	It is unidentifiable
b)	It is true that 'the unknowable' is the unknowable	iff	It is unknowable
c)	It is true that 'the indescribable' is the indescribable	iff	It is indescribable

It becomes clear that there is logical equivalence of form and meaning between the descriptions that are posited on both sides of the biconditional arrow. What is true of the left-hand side of the biconditional would equally have to be true of the right-hand side of the biconditional. This would imply that in each of the cases the equivalence in form and meaning would result in a tautology. As we have previously noted, a tautology is always true and cannot be false. It therefore follows from this that the claim 'God is ineffable' is a tautology and therefore necessarily true. This radical shift from a contradiction to a tautology alters the claim 'God is ineffable' from being necessarily false to being necessarily true.

However, as appealing as this may sound it fails to make any real difference to the paradox of ineffability. This is because, even after shifting from the falsity of a contradiction to the truth of a tautology we would still have to account for the truth-value in question. Although the claim 'God is ineffable' now becomes consistent with the T-schema, we would still be burdened with the arduous task of determining how we should construe the T-schema in order to make sense of the truth which is being inferred. In the case of a tautology we would have to account for its truth just as we have been attempting to account for the falsity of a contradiction. Therefore, the dilemma stubbornly remains. If anything, we have strayed from one paradoxical scenario to another with respect to the matter of absolute ineffability.

3. Therefore, making sense of an absolute ineffable God of Islam in virtue of analytic philosophy would result in a paradox (of ineffability).

In the first section of this essay I have demonstrated that analytic philosophy typically assumes the laws of logic and substantive or insubstantive theories of truth in making sense of things. Both of these methodological approaches are fundamental for analytic philosophy in being able to make sense of things in a particular way. The variation between the kinds of sense-making depends on the two broader types of truth theories, namely substantive and insubstantive theories of truth. To be able to appreciate the generic differences that sets both of these contrasting notions of truth apart, Sher (2016) has provided a succinct overview in the following manner,

> Substantivists (advocates of a substantive theory of truth) differ from deflationists on multiple points: Where deflationists say that "truth is entirely captured by the…triviality…that each proposition specifies its own condition for being true", substantivists say that it is far from being fully captured by this triviality; where deflationists say that "the truth predicate exists solely for the sake of a certain logical need" (Horwich: 2), substantivists say that it exists for other needs as well; where deflationists say that truth is not a deep notion, substantivists say it is; and where deflationists say that a theory of truth cannot be, or need not be, genuinely explanatory, substantivists say it can and should be. Substantivists accept the view that truth is (initially) mysterious, but believe its mysteries can be solved rationally. (Sher, 2016, p. 132)

As a result of these differences between the two broader approaches to truth we end up with different ways of being able to make sense of things. Despite the stark differences that set both of these approaches apart from one another they both lay claim to making sense of things albeit in very distinct ways. In this sense, both notions of truth would assume that they are, by way of their distinct methods, making sense of things in a cognitively satisfying way. The laws of classical logic, on the other hand, are fixated axioms that are used to determine deductively valid forms of inference. The three laws of classical logic are considered as axiomatic principles that are necessary for being rational. Conforming to these laws of logic would therefore be essential for being able to make sense of things[44].

In the second section of this essay, I established that the application of both of these assumptions would fail to make sense of an absolutely ineffable God of Islam. I first provided an explanation of what I take to be an absolutely ineffable God the Islamic tradition. Thereafter, I demonstrated that the laws of logic and both substantive and insubstantive theories of truth failed in different ways to account for an absolutely ineffable Islamic God. The failure to make sense in a cognitively satisfying way would result in a contradictory notion. I alluded to this contradiction as the paradox of ineffability. Therefore, making sense of an absolute ineffable Islamic God with the typical methodological approaches of analytic philosophy

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[44] The logicians' laws of logic merely put in writing laws of "natural good sense" (ibid.). Systems of logic designed by logicians (*logique artificielle*) are like systems of arithmetic: both are aids to human reasoning because they attempt to make explicit natural relations that anyone who must count or draw inferences will use (1962, 6.6:482 and 483–4). (Losonsky, 2006, p. 61)

would not prove to be conceptually viable. This can be appreciated from the two perspectives that I have drawn on throughout this essay, namely the laws of logic and the two broad categories of truth. Any attempt to make sense of an absolute ineffable Islamic God would primarily result in the violation of the classical laws of logic ensuing in a contradiction. Moreover, the ways in which we may attempt to make sense and account for the falseness of this contradiction, either by substantive or insubstantive theories of truth, would prove to be inconsistent with the absolute ineffability and God Himself in different ways. Making sense and accounting for the truth of a tautology would present us with exactly the same issues.

The methodological components in virtue of which analytic philosophy philosophizes would therefore prove to be vacuous in making sense of an absolutely ineffable God of Islam. If one remains highly committed to upholding both the methodological components and the absolute ineffability of God together then they shall be confronted with the paradox of ineffability. If one, however, is willing to compromise on either of the two then the results shall be in accordance to the kind of compromise they are willing to make. More than often analytic philosophers of religion are highly committed to the methodological components of analytic philosophy. This can be appreciated on the grounds that analytic philosophers of religion, on most issues, seek and manage to make sense of theological matters in cognitive satisfying ways. This is probably the most significant way in which analytic philosophy of religion has progressed ever since its revival in the latter part of the twentieth century. However, such philosophical progression would be at the cost of God's absolute ineffability. This, from an Islamic perspective, is too much of a price to pay. Entertaining the thought of relinquishing analytic philosophy, at the same time, also seems discomforting. We therefore have a dilemma that requires serious attention. To resolve this dilemma, I believe we need two alternative methodological components that would replace the ones that I have drawn on throughout this essay. These alternative methodological components ought to be ones that have the theoretical potency to overcome the paradox of ineffability. The success of these components would have wide ranging implications that are not confined to merely dissolving the paradox of ineffability. They shall, for instance, allow for analytic philosophy to operate with a broader methodological scope in accounting for other contradictory matters within theology without deeming them irrational or nonsensical.

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The Quest for Ultimate Freedom
Person and Liberty in the Russian and Italian Personalism
in the 20ᵗʰ Century

Abstract: The paper concentrates on two main theoretical problems connected with the idea of 'person', namely, 'freedom' and the 'reality of evil'. Will be considered both Russian and Italian thinkers. After a presentation of Berdyaev's philosophy of person and its critics (Vasilii Zenkovsky), alternative theological approaches to personality (Bulgakov, Lossky) will be considered. The last part of the paper deals with the heritage of Dostoevsky and Berdyaev in Italy, focusing on the 'ontology of freedom' proposed by Luigi Pareyson. The final remarks try highlight communion as the necessary horizon for freedom and personality.

Keywords: Berdyaev, Bulgakov, Dostoevsky, Pareyson, Liberty, Person, Evil

The Problem

In his essay, *Berdiaev: Un philosophe russe en France* (1991), Olivier Clément presents the theme of *person* as a running thread unifying and connecting the various developments of Russian religious thought between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The notion of personhood found its 'theological formulation in the Church fathers of the fourth century', who assured its foundation at the 'level of divine existence, but not yet clearly as far as human existence is concerned'. Clément argues that the philosophical assessment of the theological meaning of *human person* was clearly understood by modern Russian Christian thinkers[1].

This claim must be contextualized. The meaning of *person* implies a complex set of theological and philosophical ideas, whose full appreciation calls for a thorough investigation into the nexus of Western and Eastern philosophical and religious traditions. It is not by chance that this question was clearly raised in the context of Russian emigration to France, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s, when there was a fruitful encounter between Orthodox philosophers (such as Nicolay Berdyaev, Lev Shestov, Semen Frank) and theologians (George Florovsky, Serge Bulgakov, Vladimir Lossky and others) on the one hand, and on the other, representatives of contemporaneous Catholic and Reformed thinkers (such as Jacques Maritain, Emmanuel Mounier, Gabriel Marcel, and Philippe Boegner,

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1 O. Clément, *Berdiaev: Un philosophe russe en France* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991).

Wilfred Monod, Suzanne de Diétrich and others)[2]. Moreover, Nicolay Berdyaev had a direct influence on French *personalism* (he strictly collaborated with Emmanuel Mounier in the publication of the journal *Esprit*).

Existentialism was the new philosophical trend that shaped a new understanding of the person. Of crucial importance here was the *Existenzphilosophie* of Heidegger and Jaspers, especially the way in which it was understood and received between 1927 (when *Sein und Zeit* appeared) and the Second World War. The primacy of existence over essence; the reaction to idealism regarding the irreducibility of the individual; the key importance of such concepts as position in being, decision, anguish, freedom, tragic consciousness before death – all this called for a radically new understanding of the individual human being and his or her situation-in-the-world, which could no longer be explained by the dialectic of a finally reconciled totality. The problematic relationship between human existence and human liberty emerged as a central concern, highlighting the dramatic freedom of the subject before the intransigent passivity of an objective world.

If German existentialism found its forerunners in the Danish thinker Søren Kierkegaard and the German Friedrich Nietzsche, elsewhere in Europe the path to existentialism and personalism was paved by – and merged with – other philosophical traditions: either that of the French moralists of the seventeeth century, or the Slavophil tradition and Dostoevsky in Russia, or the Anglo-Saxon (Francis Herbert Bradley, Josiah Royce) and Italian (Giovanni Gentile) revisions of idealism.

In Italy, the personalist stream in philosophy did not have the character of a militant movement, as it had in France. Nor did it constitute a homogeneous philosophical school. It was rather a multiform plea for the absolute value of the 'person'. The roots of Italian personalism, as well as those of Italian existentialism, are to be found in some characteristics of 'actualism', an approach to Hegelian idealism developed by the Italian philosopher Giovanni Gentile: the theory of the concreteness of the spiritual life, the devaluation of the exteriority of the object and the valuation of the subjectivity of experience, the doctrine of the self-forming 'I' in the process of its becoming, the concurrence of the theoretical and the practical moment, and the conception of the radical responsibility of the act itself in its problematic openness – all these 'actualistic' features shaped the reception and the development of existentialist and personalist thought in Italian philosophy[3]. Although Italian personalism was undoubtedly influenced by French philosophers such as J. Maritain, E. Mounier, G. Marcel, it can be characterized as a particular development of a spiritualistic philosophy, which in turn arose as a movement towards transcendence and faith from inside 'actualist' thought. One can recall the names of Armando Carlini (1878–1959)[4], Au-

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2 See A. Arjakovsky, *La génération des penseurs religieux de l'émigration russe* (Kiev/Paris: L'Esprit et la Lettre, 2002).

3 See L. Pareyson, *Studi sull'esistenzialismo* (Florence: Sansoni, 1943), xi ff.

4 Among his books: *La vita dello spirito* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1921); *La religiosità dell'arte e della filosofia* (Florence: Sansoni, 1934); *Lineamenti di una concezione realistica dello spirito umano* (Rome: Perrella, 1942); *Il problema di Cartesio* (Bari: Laterza, 1948); *Perché credo* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1950); *Giovanni Gentile, la vita e il pensiero*, ed. La Fondazione Giovanni Gentile per gli Studi Filosofici, Studi Gentiliani, vol. VIII (Florence: Sansoni, 1957); *Le ragioni della fede* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1959).

gusto Guzzo[5], Michele Federico Sciacca, Felice Battaglia[6], Luigi Stefanini[7], and Luigi Pareyson[8] – all of whom were, in their different ways, grounded in the Catholic tradition.

Italian philosophers were much more concerned with the metaphysical question of personhood in relation to Being, and more specifically 'God', than with social and practical problems, as was the case in France (one of the reasons was certainly also the threat of the fascist regime in Italy). At the same time, Italian personalism sought to distinguish itself from neoscholastic thought, insofar as its starting point was idealist self-consciousness. According to Armando Carlini, 'cosmological metaphysics' sees God only as an explicative principle of the world, but fails to recognize 'being as being-to-itself' ('quell'essere che è essere a se stesso'), that is, consciousness conscience and spirit as constitutive of personhood. 'Being' as conceived by Aristotle and the medieval scholastics cannot make a return to itself, it 'does not know itself', and consequently is not self-reflexive, lacking self-awareness and self-creativity. This Being is not really 'in the image' of human being[9]. 'God is not a reality for us', writes Carlini, 'until we realize Him in ourselves; He is other than we, but not without us. We are creatures of God, yet, in a certain sense, we are His creators'[10].

The problem of humanity's relationship to God was central in Italian personalism, and this is undoubtedly a common feature with Russian religious thought. Although Russian religious philosophy had less influence in Italy than in France (in spite of the activity of Vjačeslav Ivanov and the famous Slavist scholar Ettore Lo Gatto, before the Second World War), one finds the names of Solov'ev, Berdyaev, Shestov; and in the second half of the twentieth century those of P. A. Florensky, S. N. Bulgakov, S. Frank, V. Lossky, who featured notably in the philosophical and theological debates (we could also add: Nesmelov, Trubetskoj, Ern, Shpet, Losev, Karsavin, but they are still largely unknown). The 'ultimate questions' posed by Russian thinkers, and particularly by Dostoevsky, emerged after the war in a renewed reflection on 'existence', when we find an original development of the themes of person and freedom in the philosophy of the late Luigi Pareyson (1918–1991), who was one of the more important Italian philosophers in the second half of the last century[11].

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5 See A. Guzzo, *L'Io e la ragione* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1947).

6 F. Battaglia, *I valori tra la metafisica e la storia* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1957).

7 See L. Stefanini, *Personalismo educativo* (Rome: Bocca, 1955); *Personalismo filosofico* (Rome: Bocca, 1956); *Personalismo sociale* (Rome: Studium, 1979).

8 I will focus on Pareyson's thought in a later section of this paper.

9 See Daniele Lo Giudice, *Dalle ceneri dell'attualismo, lo spiritualismo cattolico italiano*, http://digilander. libero.it/moses/filoitalia02.html.

10 'Dio non è una realtà per noi finché non lo realizziamo in noi, altro da noi ma non senza di noi. Noi siamo creature di Dio, eppure, in un certo senso, suoi creatori': A. Carlini, *Uomini e problemi* (Pisa: Giardini, 1960). Where not otherwise indicated, translations are mine.

11 Among his books, see in particular: *Esistenza e persona* (1950; Genoa: Il Melangolo, 1985); *Filosofia dell'interpretazione* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1988); *Filosofia della libertà* (Genoa: Il Melangolo, 1989); *Dostoevskij: Filosofia, romanzo ed esperienza religiosa* (Turin: Einaudi, 1993); *Ontologia della libertà: Il male e la sofferenza* (Turin: Einaudi, 1995). Critical studies: F. Tomatis, *Bibliografia pareysoniana* (Turin: Trauben, 1998); F. Tomatis, *Ontologia del male: L'ermeneutica di Pareyson* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1995); F. Russo, *Esistenza e libertà: Il pensiero di Luigi Pareyson* (Rome: Armando, 1993); C. Ciancio, *Pareyson e l'esistenzialismo* (Milan:

My purpose here is not historical (one can find good surveys of both Russian and Italian personalism[12], although a comparative study has still to be written). I shall concentrate instead on two main theoretical problems connected with the idea of 'person', namely, 'freedom' and the 'reality of evil'. This is also the nexus between theological and philosophical understanding of 'person', for if we suppose an 'impersonal God', theodicy is nonsense. Since Berdyaev had thoroughly worked out these themes in his thought, and moreover was one of the best known and more influential Russian religious philosophers generally in the West and particularly in Italy, I shall begin with a summary presentation of his philosophy of person (1); then, after having considered some criticisms (2) and alternative theological approaches to personality (3), I shall turn to the heritage of Dostoevsky and Berdyaev in Italy, focusing on the 'ontology of freedom' proposed by Luigi Pareyson (4). Some final remarks on communion as the necessary horizon for freedom and personality will conclude this paper.

Berdyaev's Philosophy of Person: Uncreated Freedom and Creativity

Nikolay Berdyaev – as he himself acknowledges – was anything but a systematic thinker. We shall not find in his work an analytical examination of what a person is. What we can find – and therefore should look for – is the sharpness and depth he so often achieves in asking the fundamental questions, his insistence on a few strong ideas, which enable us to radically change our ordinary way of thinking.

Berdyaev considers personality as constituted by two 'metaphysical' elements: *creativity* and *freedom*.

In the book *The Meaning of Creativity* (1916), which bears the revealing subtitle of *Essay for the Justification of Man* (Смысл творчества. Опыт оправдания человека), the transcendence of the human person is attained through the act of creation, which does not only reveal the true image of God in humanity (an idea derived from Nesmelov), but it also realizes humanity's deification; in other words, it transforms an 'individual' into a *person*:

> The creative act is liberation and overcoming ... Human nature in its fundamental principle, through Absolute Man – Christ, has already become the New Adam and united himself with the divine nature ... Only one who has experienced in himself all that is worldly, who has overcome all egoistic aspiration to self-salvation ... only one who has emancipated himself from separateness and fragmentation, has the force to be a creator: to be a person[13].

Clément underlines the eschatological character of Berdyaevian 'divinohumanisme', which reveals humanity in relation to God as an answer to the revelation of God to humankind:

Mursia, 1998); P. Sgreccia, *Il pensiero di Luigi Pareyson: Una filosofia della libertà e della sofferenza* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2006); G. Bartoli, *Filosofia del diritto come ontologia della libertà: Formatività giuridica e personalità della relazione: A partire da Luigi Pareyson* (Rome: Nuova Cultura, 2008).

12 On Russian thinkers, see V. V. Zenkovsky, *A History of Russian Philosophy*, vols. I & II (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953); Arjakovsky, *La génération*. On Italian spiritualism and personalism, see: A. Bausola, 'Neoscolastica e spiritualismo', in *La filosofia italiana dal dopoguerra a oggi*, ed. Eugenio Garin (Bari: Laterza, 1985); P. Prini, *La filosofia cattolica italiana del Novecento* (Bari: Laterza, 1997); A. Rigobello, ed., *Il personalismo* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1978); Lo Giudice, *Dalle ceneri dell'attualismo*.

13 N. Berdyaev, *Smysl tvorčestva. (Opyt opravdaniya čeloveka)* (The Meaning of Creative Act: An Essay in Justification of Man), Moscow: Leman & Sakharova, 1916 ("Introduction").

> No more God against man, nor man against God, but the birth of God in man and the birth of man in God, because man cannot find his real humanity except in God[14].

But creativity presupposes freedom. Again, we are not here merely dealing with material conditions for freedom (freedom of action, of movement, of choice, etc). Creativity presupposes freedom because both are rooted in God and inscribed in humanity's very being. Only free creativity transcends the plane of 'objectified' existence (it is an interesting feature of Berdyaev's thought, this constant reference to theological speculation).

In this sense, freedom is even an *a priori* in comparison to the transcendental attributes of Being: *bonum, verum, pulchrum*. In his idea of the priority of freedom over being (*učenie o svobode na grani bytija*), Berdyaev is much in debt to Schelling's later metaphysics. But he found his own way to it by reading Dostoevsky and Western mystics such as Jakob Böhme. As Berdyaev wrote in his monograph on the great Russian writer:

> Truth makes man free; but he must freely accept it … Freedom cannot be identified with what is good, true and perfect. Freedom has its original nature: freedom is freedom, and it is not simply 'the good'. And any merging and identification of liberty with the good or with perfection, is a denial of liberty itself, an acceptance of constraint and violence[15].

Only if rooted in freedom, can goodness be effectively good, and truth be true. I would not say the same of beauty, since beauty – as Dostoevsky teaches – remains 'an enigma': in fact, it retains the structural ambiguity of radical freedom, which can generate either good or evil. One can find interesting developments of this idea in Luigi Pareyson.

The most remarkable development in Berdyaev's ideas on freedom, in connection with personality, is to be found in his major works: *The Destiny of Man: An Essay in Paradoxical Ethics* (*O naznačenii čeloveka. Opyt paradoksal'noj etiki*, 1931) and *The Slavery and Freedom of Man* (*O rabstve i svobode čeloveka. Opyt personalističeskoj filosofii*, 1939). The historiosophical consequences of his personalism are disclosed in his last book, *An Essay in Eschatological Metaphysics* (1947).

Berdyaev repeats Scheler's judgement: 'In no other time in history as at present, man has become so problematic'[16]. Here we find the real problem of modernity: it is not God or 'divine personhood' that requires investigation, but precisely humanity. Personhood is a spiritual value, the higher hierarchical value within the world; and more than that: its value presupposes super-personal values. 'Personhood is the bearer and creator of super-personal values', it exists only if super-personal values exist, and its existence (существование) implies the existence of God[17].

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14 'Non plus Dieu contre l'homme, ni l'homme contre Dieu, mais la naissance de Dieu en l'homme et la naissance de l'homme en Dieu, car l'homme ne peut trouver qu'en Dieu sa véritable humanité': Clément, *Berdiaev*, 33.

15 N. Berdyaev, *Mirosozercanie Dostoevskogo* (The Conception of Dostoevsky), Paris: Ymca-press, 1923 (chapter 3, "Liberty").

16 'Zu keiner Zeit der Geschichte der Mensch sich so problematisch geworden ist, wie in der Gegenwart': M. Scheler, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (1928), quoted in N. Berdyaev, *O naznačenii čeloveka*, Moscow: Ast, 2006, 76.

17 Berdyaev, *O naznačenii*, 93.

This self-transcendence is attained through creativity and freedom. Human liberty participates in the uncreated liberty of God. Here we find a way out of 'onto-theology': the person – as free creativity – is *before* being itself, insofar as freedom precedes being:

> *Personality is prior to being.* This is the foundation of personalism ...Freedom cannot be derived from being; freedom is rooted in nothing, in baselessness, in non being ...Freedom is without foundation, it is not determined by being nor born of it ... There exist, therefore, only freedom and personality. The supremacy of freedom over being is also the supremacy of spirit over being. Being is static; spirit is dynamic. Spirit is not being. One cannot by the means which intellectual processes provide think of spirit as an object. Spirit is subject, subjectivity. It is freedom and creative act[18].

Before discussing Berdyaev's approach, it may be worth remembering an important feature of his philosophical method. In his review of Nesmelov's *Science of Man* (1909), Berdyaev wrote that 'one cannot come to faith through philosophy, but after a preliminary act of faith, a *Christian gnosis* becomes both possible and necessary'[19]. Berdyaev's philosophy, which elsewhere he himself defines as 'mystical realism', is a free and creative reflection from within the Christian experience of faith[20]. Does this approach deliver a genuine understanding of a Christian concept of personhood? This brings us to some severe criticisms of Berdyaev's thinking.

A Critical Appraisal of Berdyaev's Personalism

Vasilii Zenkovsky, in his *History of Russian Philosophy*, beyond a general appraisal, harshly critiqued both the method and the main arguments in Berdyaev's notions of creativity and freedom.

First, argues Zenkovsky, there is a contradiction between creativity as a free act of the Spirit, intended to definitively free man 'from the world and release all of his creativity', and the objectification of creative activity in objects and facts (including moral acts), unavoidably bonded to this world. Paradoxically, 'embodiments of creative acts fall under the sway of the laws of the world'[21]. But in that case, observes Zenkovsky, 'creativity loses its meaning':

> The situation is not helped by Berdyaev's assertion that 'every creative moral act marks the end of this world' ... If, as he tells us, 'every creative act – moral, artistic etc. – marks the end of one world, a *soaring* upwards to a new plane of existence', then all of this remains illusory, for the 'results' of creative acts drive us back into the fallen world and thus simply reinforce it[22].

18 N. Berdyaev, *Slavery and Freedom*, translated by R.M. French, Foreword by B. Jakim, San Rafael, CA: Semantron, 2009, 75-76.

19 N. Berdyaev, *Tipy religioznoj mysli v Rossii*, Paris: Ymca-press, 303.

20 See Berdyaev, *Smysl tvorčestva*, chapter 5. The term "mystical realism" is borrowed from Dmitry Merezhkovsky and Viacheslav Ivanov, see: A. Mainardi, *Le radici patristiche e moderne della mistica ortodossa russa. Il dibattito sulla mistica nel pensiero religioso russo nella prima metà del XX secolo*, in Š. Marinčák [ed.], *Slovanská spiritualita a mystika: Súbor štúdií*, Košice 2011, 109-123.

21 N. Berdyaev, *Opyt esxatologičeskoj metafisiki. Tvorčestvo i ob"ektivacija*, Paris: Ymca-Press, 1947, 159, 162, 166, 167.

22 Zenkovsky, *History*, vol. 2, 771.

Secondly, the Russian historian of philosophy remarks that there is a paradoxical, solipsistic outcome to Berdyaev's personalism, at whose roots stands the doctrine that 'freedom is prior to being', because 'our own nature cannot be the source of our freedom'. For Zenkovsky, the priority of freedom over being leads Berdyaev 'to weaken the connection between man and God, since "man is the child of God and the child of freedom ... and [God] has no power over ... freedom"'. Berdyaev's 'antihierarchical personalism'

> actually *divides* rather than unites human beings; and since personality is 'prior to being' and is not born from the 'womb of being', an element of pluralism is present here ... In order to blunt this tendency towards the isolation of individual persons from one another and to provide a foundation for an 'ethics of creation', Berdyaev introduces the concept of 'communality' or 'community'. Strictly speaking 'solitude [solipsism] can be transcended ... only in mystic experience'[23].

So, on the one hand, the notion of creativity, upon closer scrutiny, reveals itself incapable of avoiding objectification and consequently incapable of giving a sure foundation to the transcendence of personhood (as Berdyaev himself asserts, 'objectification is above all depersonalization'[24]). On the other hand, the ultimate character of freedom tends to isolate one person from another. Although Berdyaev himself recognizes that 'egoism destroys personality'[25], his mistrust for any form of institutionalization ('hierarchical personalism'), which would organize social relationships between persons, led him implicitly to a concept of personhood very close to Leibniz's monads. It would seem that these contradictions disappear only at a mystical level.

One may wonder whether there is a theoretical corrective to these undesirable outcomes. The problem probably lies in the understanding of the created world, which Berdyaev considers generally in negative terms, in its 'fallen' condition. If the world is not the place for the free development of human activity, for humanity's cooperation in the creative work of God, but only a state of passive limitation in that creativity, then any objective result of this creative activity will fall again into the dead world of objects, and no transformation or transfiguration of matter will really happen in the historical time, but only at its end, at the irruption of eschatological time. The same thing can be said as far as historical relationships among persons are concerned: any form of social order would ultimately be a coercion of the metaphysical liberty of the person, and only the apocalyptical era of the Spirit could solve the inner contradiction between the two opposite poles of freedom (of the one) and unity (of the many)[26].

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[23] Ibid., 778-79.

[24] Berdyaev, *Opyt esxatologičeskoj metafisici*, 73.

[25] Berdyaev, *Slavery and Freedom*, 42.

[26] 'Personality is the universal in an individually unrepeatable form. It is a union of the universal-infinite and the individual-particular. It is in this apparent contradiction that personality exists. The personal in a human being is precisely what is not shared with others, but in this difference (non-commonness) consists the power of the universal. The understanding of human personality as microcosm is set in antithesis to the organic-hierarchical interpretation of individuals, which transforms human beings into a subordinate part of a whole, into a common, a universal. But personality is not a part of the universe, the universe is a part of personality, it is its quality. Such is the paradox of personalism': Berdyaev, *Slavery and Freedom*, 22.

In an earlier review of Berdyaev's book *The Meaning of Creativity*[27], Zenkovsky reproached the author's misunderstanding of the authentic ecclesial tradition, as he fails to distinguish between Christianity as 'eternal ideal given us in the Gospel, and its historical incarnation'[28]. Only a correct understanding of Church as communion, one may argue, overcomes the self-enclosure of individuals. What Zenkovsky implicitly criticized in Berdyaev's approach to 'person' was that he failed to highlight how different persons relate to each other in a *free communion* of purposes. Beyond this idea stands the theological debate on *sobornost*.

Is Christian philosophy of the person not viable without theology then?

Two Theological Approaches to the Mystery of Person: Serge Bulgakov and Vladimir Lossky

There are two ways to handle the religious problematic of personhood: either to concentrate on humanity's tragic situation in the world, and then consider its openness to transcendence (the way chosen by existentialism and Berdyaev himself); or to deduce anthropology from theology, since God created humankind in God's image and likeness (Gen 1:27). The latter could be an alternative approach to Christian personalism, with a point of departure in divine personhood rather than in (human?) experience – an approach taken by both Serge Bulgakov and Vladimir Lossky[29]. We need to consider these aspects in their different theologies of personhood, in order to shed new light on the two main questions raised by our examination of Berdyaev's philosophy, namely: (1) how can the creativity of the person *inside* the world open a way to transcend the objective world itself? (In other words, how can we understand the transcendence of the person?); and (2) how is the ultimate freedom of the person to be understood, so as to avoid solipsism?

There is, however, a basic methodological divergence between Bulgakov and Lossky. Bulgakov, in trying to explain the possibility of the 'Humanity of God' (*Bogočelovečestvo*), looks for a *positive* ('cataphatic') method to explicate the four *negative* determinations of the Chalcedonian Creed. He finds it in the idea of Sophia, which has a constitutive duali-

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27 V. V. Zenkovsky, *Problema tvorčestva: Po povodu knigi N. A. Berdjaeva "Smysl tvorčestva. Opyt opravdaniya čeloveka*, in *Xristianskaya mysl* (1916), nr. 9. 124-48.

28 V. V. Zenkovsky, *Sobranie sočinenij. Vol. 1. O russkoj filosofii i literature: Stat'i, očerki i recenzii. 1912-1961*, Moscow: Russkij put', 2008, 93.

29 A very stimulating alternative philosophy of person was proposed by Lev Karsavin, who managed to hold both a patristic understanding of person (divine-human) and a sophiological interpretation of the relation between humanity and God, the cosmos and history: see Dominic Rubin, 'Lev Karsavin: Personhood as the Fullness of Being and Orthodox Thought', paper presented at the conference, *Theology of Person in Eastern and Western Christianity*, Bose, Italy, 21–24 October 2010. As far as secondary literature on S. Bulgakov and V. Lossky is concerned, I mention here only a few major works: C. Evtuhov, *The Cross and the Sickle: Sergei Bulgakov and the Fate of Russian Religious Philosophy,1890–1920* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); P. Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov: Orthodox Theology in a New Key* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000); *Vladimir Lossky, théologhien orthodox // La vie spirituelle: ascétique et mystique* n. 730 (1999) (texts by M. Stavrou, N. Ozoline, J. Colosimo, O. Clément, M. de Gandillac, É. Behr-Sigel, D. Allchin, B. Bobrinskoy, C. Aslanoff); R. Williams, *Bogoslovie V. N. Losskogo. Izloženie i kritika* (The Theology of V. N. Lossky. Exposition and Critique), Kiev: Dukh i litera, 2009.

ty: non-created (Sophia as the οὐσία θεοῦ) and created (humanity and creation in God; the Mother of God as figure of the eschatological Church). The key notion that enables Bulgakov to avoid pantheism is that of ипостасность, *hypostasness*, the possibility of becoming a person, the maternal womb of personhood, the not-yet-fully-realized as person. This dynamic relationship between *hypostasis* and *hypostasness* is both in God and in humanity, and corresponds to the twofold Sophia, 'celestial' and 'terrestrial'.

Lossky's critique of Bulgakov is in the form of an uncompromising methodological challenge to any theology that is not at its core 'apophatic': apophaticism for Lossky is not a dialectical moment in theological argumentation (as it is in the Thomistic tradition), but is the operative character of any theological discourse, which can never attain to the inner essence of God, but only to God's operations (ἐνεργίαι; Lossky's apophaticism is strictly linked to his Palamitic interpretation of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite)[30].

These two different theological approaches lead to different conceptions of human personhood.

For Bulgakov, God himself possesses the eternal capability to become person as his own self-revelation, as total donation and total reception of personhood through the other, as the power of love:

> In the domain of the spirit, along with hypostasis and nature, there is another possible state: hypostasness. It is the capability of *becoming hypostasis* [*ipostasirovat'sja*], of *belonging* to a hypostasis [*prinadležit' ipostasi*], of being its expansion, of *giving oneself up to a hypostasis* [*otdavat'sja ej*]. This is a particular hypostatic state not through one's own hypostasis, but through a diverse hypostasis, hypostatization through self-sacrifice. This is the power of love ...[31]

By analogy to this divine world, the sophianic *hypostasness* within creation finds its autonomous singularity in the human person as 'the world's concentration, its lord, its (predestined) god'. The human person is the culmination of the process of personification activated in the created world by the divine Sophia. An ineffable and incomprehensible act of God's Love calls into being its own image, granting to this image God's own 'hypostasness': that is, God creates something out of nothing, creates *hypostasis*, and this hypostasis is the human person[32].

In Bulgakov's perspective any contradiction or contraposition between human creativity and the 'objective' world (as was the case in Berdyaev's thought) is removed, because both have a 'sophianic' basis and both tend to final, 'full' personification:

> God has Sophia in himself, or within himself, as his own revelation; the creature has Sophia *beyond* itself [*nad* soboj] as its source ... That is why each creaturely creativity is not absolute, be-

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30 The difference between the theological conceptions of Bulgakov and Lossky is more profound than the well-known doctrinal (and ideological) polemic on 'Sophiology' of the 1930s; see V. Losskij, *Spor o Sofii* (Paris: Confrèrie de Saint Photios, 1936); N. T. Eneeva, *Spor o sofiologii v russkom zarubež'e 1920–1930 godov* (Moscow: Institut vseobshchei istorii RAN, 2001); A. Arjakovsky, *Essai sur le père Serge Bulgakov (1871–1944): Philosophe et théologien chrétien* (Paris: Parole et silence, 2006), 99–125.

31 S. N. Bulgakov, *Ipostas' i ipostasnost' (*Scholia k *"Svetu Nevečernomu")*, in *Pervoobraz i obraz*, vol. 2, Moscow-St. Peterburg: Inapress, 1999, 318.

32 Ibid., 319.

cause it comes not from itself, but is determined by its sophianic nature. The creatural hypostasis is only the hypostasized centre of an absolute nature, which the creature is called to unveil, or to enclose in its conscience and creativity[33].

For Lossky, the entire conceptual framework of Bulgakov's sophiology, which ultimately depends on a philosophical schema, prevents him from really clarifying the transcendence of God with regard to the world, and consequently the transcendence of the person, which remains too strictly linked with nature. 'Sophianic personhood', objects Lossky, is actually a 'naturalized personhood', which cannot avoid determinism.

The only way to a Christian conception of the human person must pass through a genuine (namely, 'apophatic') theological understanding of the Christological dogma. The 'hypostasis' of Christ can be reduced neither to his divine nor to his human nature. There is an irreducible apophatic moment here, which correlates the mystery of Christ to the mystery of every human person. The inadequacy of Boethius' definition of person as 'individual of rational substance'[34] lies in its very pretension to explain what remains ultimately inexplicable: the uniqueness of every human being, transcending any definition of 'human nature'. A person is an infinite openness to the other, an unending capacity to go beyond its self-enclosed isolation, to exceed its own nature[35]. Lossky claims that the 'irreducibility of the *hypostasis* to human individuality' ('l'irréductibilité de l'hypostase à l'individu humain') is a common feature of (Greek) patristic theology, although he himself cautiously mentions here the 'ecstatic character of [Heidegger's] *Dasein*'[36].

After the fall, humanity is incapable of fulfilling its own vocation of becoming person: of performing the act of perfect self-transcendence as self-denial and self-donation. Only the Christ, the perfect and divine image of God, accomplishes by his obedience to the Father what Adam's rebellion left unfinished, and so restores to human nature its perfect *resemblance* to God. Indeed, the Redemption realized by the Christ is completed by the work of the Holy Spirit, who bestows both diversity and uniqueness on every human person. Lossky insists on the double economy of Christ *and* of the Holy Spirit: only the correlation of both provides unity *and* freedom, transformation of nature *and* sanctification of a multiplicity of persons. If the action of Christ unifies, maintains Lossky, the action of the Holy Spirit diversifies:

Le Christ devient l'image appropriée à la nature commune de l'humanité; le saint Esprit confère à chaque personne créée à l'image de Dieu la possibilité de réaliser la ressemblance dans la

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33 Ibid., 322.

34 'Persona proprie dicitur naturae rationalis individua substantia'. *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne, 162 vols. (Paris: 1857-66), vol. 64, p. 1343C.

35 'La personne signifie l'irréductibilité de l'homme à sa nature … *quelqu'un* qui se distingue de sa propre nature, de quelqu'un qui dépasse sa nature, tout en la contenant, qui la fait exister comme nature humaine par ce dépassement et, cependant, n'existe pas en lui-même, en dehors de la nature qu'il 'enhypostasie' et qu'il dépasse sans cesse'. V. Lossky, 'La notion théologique de la personne humaine', in *A l'image et à la ressemblance de Dieu* (Paris: Aubier, 1967), 118.

36 Ibid. R. Williams shows that this claim is untenable, and suggests that Lossky had actually originally developed a post-Augustinian tradition: Williams, *Bogoslovie*, 116–38.

nature commune. L'Un prête son hypostase à la nature, l'Autre donne sa divinité aux personnes. Ainsi l'œuvre du Christ unifie, l'œuvre du Saint-Esprit diversifie. Pourtant, l'une est impossible sans l'autre: l'unité des natures se réalise dans les personnes; quant aux personnes – elles ne peuvent atteindre leur perfection, devenir pleinement personnes, que dans l'unité de nature, en cessant d'être « individus » vivant pour eux-mêmes, ayant leur nature et leur volonté propres, « individuelles »[37].

The ultimate freedom of the person is realized by Christ; and only by communicating it to the mystical body of Christ in the Holy Spirit, do human beings again find their inner indelible personhood. This in turn avoids both natural determinism (spiritual personhood *truly* transcends nature) and solipsism (individual persons are unified in the divine-human Body of Christ, the Church).

A Hermeneutics of Personhood: Pareyson's Ontology of Freedom

The theological approaches to personhood by Bulgakov and Lossky took Christological dogma as a starting point. Bulgakov tried to explore its content *positively*, in order to deduce the characteristics of human personality; while Lossky insisted on the dogma's apophatic form, which he then applied also to the human person. Their theological method relies on a Platonic (which is to say *essentialist*) concept of 'nature', albeit understood in a dynamic way ('sophianic' in Bulgakov's case, and 'energetic' or 'Palamitic' in Lossky's). What actually seems to get lost in these systems is the fathomless depths of freedom, the possibility of choosing the evil, and the unpredictable power of negation and destruction. They do not seem sufficiently to take into account the tragic weight of history. One of Dostoevsky's great contributions was to disclose the unknowable abyss of the human heart. Berdyaev's way of expressing this anti-metaphysical discovery was to say that 'freedom precedes Being'. What was needed in order to go further along this line of enquiry was a radically new method: not platonic essentialism – which looks for a metaphysical foundation of 'person' – but a 'hermeneutics of existence', opening up new ways towards meaning and comprehension *from within* contradictions.

In his later years Luigi Pareyson, the Italian philosopher who pondered over these ultimate questions posed by the Russian thinkers, came to call his philosophical method a 'hermeneutics of religious experience'[38]. Commenting on Meister Eckhart's paradoxical statements about God – 'God is nothing', and 'outside God there is nothing'[39] – Pareyson remarks that if we take these expressions in a metaphysical sense, they affirm either a radical nihilism or a total pantheism. Or one might consider them as expressions of negative theology. But what really matters for Pareyson is the philosophical understanding of the religious (mystical) experience that they undoubtedly convey. And the only way to speak philosophically of this religious experience – that is to say, to clarify the religious con-

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[37] V. Lossky, *Théologie mystique de l'Église d'Orient* (Paris: Aubier, 1944), 163.
[38] I will take into account here his two posthumous books: *Dostoevskij* (1993) and *Ontologia della libertà* (1995).
[39] 'Gott ist warhafftig nicht ... ein Tunkles nicht'; 'Gott ist das ärmste Ding'; 'Die Gottheit ist die Wüste', on one side; and on the other: '*extra ipsum nihil est*, Niht ûzer Gote enist'.

sciousness in its broadly human sense and in its universal significance – is as a 'hermeneutic': 'In a hermeneutic philosophy of religious consciousness … any affirmation has simultaneously a philosophical and a religious character: while mythical discourse speaks to the religious conscience, hermeneutics speaks to the philosophical mind. A religious datum is at the same time a content of faith, either personal or ecclesial, and a problem of meaning, philosophical and universal'[40].

In this way we must understand also his interpretation of Dostoevsky, which is deeply influenced by the works of Berdyaev, Shestov and Evdokimov[41]. At the very heart of Dostevsky's novels, Pareyson sees the dialectic of freedom between the two poles of freedom as *obedience* ('obedience to being, humble service to the truth and to reality') and freedom as *rebellion* ('rebellion against God, struggle against the Eternal, betrayal of truth')[42]. Here is Dostoevsy's anthropology and his pneumatology (here again Pareyson refers to Berdyaev). But one must be careful not to distort the dialectic of freedom into a dialectic of necessity. The ambiguity of freedom is not eradicable. 'Whether ideas may be divine or demoniac' (and for Dostoevsky ideas *are* personal; they are always incarnated) 'is of no matter, if there is no freedom, by which man can choose the one or the other'[43]. But the crucial relevance of freedom is fully detected in its connection with evil (in Pareyson we find the affirmation that 'Liberty is not identifiable with the Good'). And here we come to Pareyson's more original speculative proposal.

Dostoevsky opened the way to investigate the original link between freedom and nothingness. Philosophy has always been suspicious about freedom considered in isolation. True and deep freedom terrifies humanity, as 'The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor' so marvelously demonstrates.

Freedom, in fact, notes Pareyson in his commentary, is ambiguous, perhaps the most ambiguous of all human realities. And its ambiguity derives – as Berdyaev noted – from its 'originality': freedom 'does not presuppose anything, not even reason, which could provide a criterion to distinguish between good and evil'. Dostoevsky's 'underground man' showed, in any event, that reason is incapable of giving such a criterion[44]. As freedom is radical, primeval, original, it must also be absolute, unlimited, arbitrary: but these are precisely the characteristics of freedom as 'demoniac rebellion'. Dostoevsky's bewildering discovery, according to Pareyson, is that this was also the freedom given by Christ: he, 'who became obedient unto death' (Phil 2:8), thereby gave humanity unlimited inner freedom. The burden of choice between rebellion and free obedience is now in the hands of every human be-

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40 Pareyson, *Ontologia della libertà*, 237.
41 Pareyson quotes the French and Italian translations of Shestov and Berdyaev: L. Šestov, *La philosophie de la tragedie* (Paris: Pléiade, 1926); N. Berdjajev, *La concezione di Dostoevskij* (Turin: Einaudi, 1945). He quotes also P. Evdokimov, *Dostoievskij et le problème du mal* (Valence: Imprimeries Réunies, 1942). Among theologians he quotes also: E. Thurneysen, *Dostojevskij* (Rome: Doxa, 1929); R. Guardini, *Il mondo religioso di Dostoevskij* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1951).
42 Pareyson, *Dostoevskij*, 24.
43 Ibid., 115.
44 Ibid., 132.

ing; the supreme judge of freedom is freedom itself. The unlimited nature of Christ's gift of freedom appears clearly in the words of the Grand Inquisitor to Jesus:

> At the place of the old, solid law, now man should resolve with free heart what is good and what is evil, guided only by *your image* before him ...

Here Pareyson makes an important remark: 'The image of Christ is not a piece of evidence that imposes itself on one's mind, but an appeal to one's liberty'[45]. The true image of God, Jesus Christ, is also the true image of the human person, and the original source of both is freedom. Insofar as Christ overcame the temptations in the desert, refusing to impose truth through miraculous power and authority, but freely choosing to be obedient to only his Father's will, he thereby restored human freedom, rescuing it from the original evil choice. But this in turn means that even God is committed to freedom, and is answerable to freedom:

> God demands liberty and offers himself to it: this is the tragedy of man, as every decision of his becomes a wager ... But it is also the tragedy of God, who accepts only to be freely accepted, and therefore makes himself vulnerable to human freedom[46] ...

Human personhood is perfectly realized in Christ, and it relies ultimately on freedom. Any essentialist concept of *the image of God* – however it might be understood – is definitively overcome. Only such a hermeneutic approach can attain this result.

Such an approach gives Pareyson the conceptual tools he needs to develop and deepen a hermeneutical *ontology of freedom*. In the beginning there was freedom. Freedom is the first step, the primordial act without precedent: it is pure irruption, an unforeseen and sudden explosion. This is what the Italian philosopher calls 'the nothingness of freedom':

> Freedom is primal source, primal commencement. It originates from within itself: freedom's source is freedom itself ... No expectation attracts freedom and no preparation anticipates it. It is pure irruption, unforeseen and sudden as an explosion ... This outburst is 'the nothingness of freedom'. Freedom points to nothingness in the very instant it affirms itself[47].

Here, admits Pareyson, we are faced with the more difficult facet of the problem of freedom: its relationship to negation. The nexus between freedom and nothingness has been originally experienced by God himself, in the very instant he chose to be rather than to implode into nothingness; that is why *freedom* is prior being, for it is the absolute primal act, both source and choice, by which God originates himself and poses himself as original positivity. Pareyson goes as far as to speak about 'evil in God' as a 'possibility always present and always discarded and surpassed'. God is the original choice between being and not-be-

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[45] 'Ora, l'immagine del Cristo non è un'evidenza che s'impone alla mente, bensì un appello rivolto alla libertà'. Ibid.

[46] 'Dio richiede la libertà e le si offre: questa è la tragedia dell'uomo, nel senso che ogni sua decisione diventa così una scommessa ...; ma è anche la tragedia di Dio, che accetta solo di essere liberamente accettato, e quindi si espone alla libertà umana'. Ibid., 135.

[47] 'La libertà è inizio primo, primo cominciamento. Essa si origina da sé: l'inizio della libertà è la libertà stessa ... Nessuna attesa la attrae e nessun preparativo la anticipa. Essa è irruzione pura, improvvisa e repentina come un'esplosione ... Questo carattere improvviso è il *nulla della libertà*. La libertà è in rapporto con il nulla nel momento stesso in cui si afferma'. Pareyson, *Ontologia della libertà*, 470.

ing. But this choice has a price: the irreducible priority of freedom, its unavoidable tragic presence. Only a philosophy of freedom, and not a philosophy of being, can illustrate the original contact between freedom and nothingness[48].

Interestingly enough, we find here the same philosophical sources as in Berdyaev: Meister Eckhart, Jakob Böhme, and particularly F. W. J. Schelling, whom Pareyson considers the forerunner of contemporary existentialism[49].

The tragic side of personhood is revealed by the 'co-suffering of God and humanity' ('consofferenza divina e umana'). Suffering defines the common space of solidarity between God and the human person. The stronghold of tragic thought, says Pareyson, is the principle that 'collaboration in grace' between God and man may occur only after 'collaboration in suffering'; and that, paradoxically, 'without sorrow, the world seems enigmatic and life absurd'[50], because suffering reveals the sense of freedom and the mystery of sin and atonement, perdition and salvation, in which God, man and the world are involved:

> Suffering challenges any objectifying and apodictic metaphysics, any philosophical system searching only a harmonious and closed totality, any philosophy of being that is concerned only with foundations. Only suffering contains the meaning of freedom and reveals the secret of that universal event involving God, man and the world in a tragic history of evil and pain, sin and atonement, perdition and salvation[51].

In the very depths of human personhood we find God immersed in history with all its tragic reality. Here 'salvation' is not an abstract concept, but a concrete and dramatic experience.

6 Conclusion: Personhood, Freedom and Communion

To conclude, let me summarize briefly our comparative reading of Russian and Italian thinkers on personhood and add some further remarks on freedom and communion.

The quest for ultimate freedom, which characterizes European philosophy in the first half of the twentieth century, shows some original developments in Russian and Italian personalism, which was part of a Christian philosophical response to the problems raised by existentialist philosophy. If Orthodox theologians such as Serge Bulgakov and Vladimir Lossky tried to provide a new understanding of person from within the dogmatic tradition of the Church, then Berdyaev's proposal to define the person in terms of creativity and freedom opened an unexplored field of investigation on the relationship between man, God and the world. Similarly, Luigi Pareyson's 'hermeneutics of the person' located the primal 'tragedy of freedom' within God himself, since evil cannot be simply eliminated, but remains as the negative limit of freedom. However, it can be overcome through love's gratuitous self-donation in God's eternal act of choosing to be rather than collapse into nothingness.

Here we are not in some nebulous ahistorical realm of pure essences, but at the heart

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48 Ibid., 471.

49 See: L. Pareyson, *Lo stupore della ragione in Schelling*, in *Romanticismo. Esistenzialismo. Ontologia della libertà* (Milano: Mursia, 1979); Pareyson, *Ontologia della libertà*, 376–437. See also P. D'Alessandro, *Linguaggio e comprensione* (Naples: Guida, 1982), 113–54.

50 Pareyson, *Ontologia della libertà*, 478.

51 Ibid.

of a tragic history, in which God himself is immersed. The redemption of history comes from within history itself, when free will is not directed to self-assertion but to self-dona-tion, and personal identity is discovered as inner dialogue with the other[52]; then the mys-tery of the person is opened up to communion.

If the great modern parabola can be described as a passage from heteronomy to au-tonomy – the exodus from a closed hierarchical world into an open universe based on the principle of equality, in which everyone is theoretically the architect of their own future – then the paradoxical result of 'selfish creativity' is the radical solitude of the individual, of which the anonymity of the crowd is the hidden face.

The modern suspicion of any 'coercion' of the self, paradoxically, risks annulling the free gift of encountering the 'other' in her autonomous otherness, either through the col-lective myth of ideology or in the bland indifference of individualism. An authentic dialec-tic between communion and personal freedom calls for confidence and gratitude towards the other in order to be realized: in an ever new act of thanksgiving, in *eucharistic* practice. Here we have a new ontological analogy. Human communion as *koinonia*, as *participation* in the life of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 10:16), not only defines the horizontal plane of relations be-tween persons, but offers a glimpse into the life of the divine Persons. 'To be signifies life, and life signifies communion' (John Zizioulas). While without the person there is no com-munion, without communion there can be no person.

The authentic 'ecclesial' dimension of the dynamic between personhood and com-munion opens in God's today, the irruption of eschatological newness: the definitive com-munion of God as 'all in all', which inscribes communion in the centre of the personal relation between humanity and God. This is all the more present in the postmodern at-omization of the subject. The Christian notion of 'person' – in which the negative is not suppressed, but embraced– constitutes a point of overcoming the potentially destructive opposition between the antagonistic impulses of the ego (anarchism) and the aspiration towards oneness by the collective (totalitarianism).

What, then, is the 'personhood'? A wonder opened to gratefulness. A marvel that trusts the other. A freedom that gives itself freely. A profound liberty, disconcerting at times, but born of love and only of love. The creative shaping of a person is indeed an 'art': a dialogic practice of inner life and relatedness to others; a love of living concretely, daily, within the human community, as a horizon towards which one moves.

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[52] See J.-P. Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris: Seuil, 1990).

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Eschatological Perspective
of N. Berdyaev's Philosophy of History

Abstract: The fundamental insight that N. Berdyaev obtains in his historiosophical reflections is that history is antinomic and the historical process is catastrophic since it has to end, because "the world cannot exist eternally". In its global, empirical (objective) dimension, history resembles an absurd comedy "in which nothing ever succeeds". The idea of history as a long duration (long duree) and permanent progress misses its essence. According to Berdyaev, such history is meaningless, and it has to end. Its true meaning is revealed only in "its end" and "before the face of eternity". Terrestrial history does not have its epilogue and the final solution in historical time but in celestial history when the boundaries between the immanent and the transcendent world disappear. History is the path to another and different, sublime and spiritual (noumenal) world that lies beyond the boundaries of everything historical. The destiny of man, which lies at the heart of history, assumes a meta-historical goal and a trans-historical solution to the destiny of history in a different, eternal time. To summarize, history has an eschatological meaning. Although there is an unsolvable tragic conflict between the individual human destiny and the destiny of humanity as a whole within the framework of history, Berdyaev, following the entire tradition of Russian religious philosophy, is convinced that the overcoming of that contradiction on the historical level is possible with love as the salvation and the main driving force of the soul and the source of all the spiritual creation of man.

Keywords: Spirit, creativity, objectification, Ungrund, destiny, meaning, catastrophism, apocalypse, eschatology

Introduction:
Eschatological and soteriological character of Russian philosophy

> „An eschatological feeling, a feeling of imminent catastrophe and the end of the world are very peculiar to me... I see history in eschatological perspective."
>
> (N. Berdyaev, *Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Autobiography*, pp. 336-337)

The interest for social issues and historiosophy has always formed the essential feature for Russian philosophical thought[1]. For example, one of the greatest historians of Russian philosophy, Vasily Zenkovsky points out that "Russian thought is completely historiosophical". It constantly focuses on the questions about the meaning of history, its end, and the

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[1] Cf. T.Yu. Sidorina, Krizis XX veka. Prognozy russkih myslitelei (Eshatologizm russkoi filosofskoi mysli) M., 1998, p.12.

like. The eschatological conceptions of the 16th century are intertwined with the utopias of the 19th century, and the historiosophical reflections of the most diverse thinkers. This particular, overemphasized interest in the philosophy of history is, of course, not accidental and is based on those spiritual assumptions that arise from the Russian past, from the general national peculiarities of "the Russian soul"[2]. Nikolai Berdyaev, one of the most famous Russian thinkers, also writes about this specific religious and eschatological colouring of Russian philosophical thought at the beginning of the last century. Here is what he says about the *differentia specifica* between Russian and Western European philosophical thought: "Russian philosophical thought has always had a predilection for the eschatological problem and apocalypticism. This is what distinguishes it from Western thought and also gives it a religious character"[3].

Indeed, all great Russian philosophers from the mid-19th century to the 1930s, primarily N. Fyodorov, V. Solovyov, S. Bulgakov, N. Berdyaev, S. Frank, G. Fedotov, V. Rozanov, and others, thematize the mentioned issue. It is present not only in philosophical texts but also in the art criticism, literature and other writings.

In this presentation, we will briefly refer to N. Berdyaev's philosophy of history and we will try to highlight some of the basic aspects of his eschatological conception.

Historiosophical issues are amongst the central themes in N. Berdyaev's prolific variety of works. The intention to grasp the meaning and essence of history and determine the fundamental tendency of its development is present in almost all stages of his spiritual creativity and represents the most significant feature of his thought. It was this segment of Berdyaev's creation that attracted the attention of Western philosophical public. He devoted his books *The Meaning of History* (1913) and *The New Middle Ages* (1924) to the questions of philosophy of history. He also elaborates on these issues in his other books: *The Philosophy of Inequality* (1923), *Slavery and Freedom* (1933), *An Essay on Eschatological Metaphysics* (1947), *The Origin and Meaning of Russian Communism* (1955). In a word, Berdyaev was practically engaged in the study and reflection of the meaning of history throughout his life. One of the most authoritative historians of Russian philosophy, N. Poltoratsky, expressed the quintessence of his philosophical oeuvre with the following words: "... whatever Berdyaev wrote about, he did it from a particular historical, historical-philosophical perspective ... during the whole of his creative life-span ... he was and he remained primarily a philosopher of history."[4]

The starting point of Berdyaev's historiosophical conception is that man is immanently present in history, i.e. that there is a close and unbreakable unity of the historical and man. He says: "Man is in the highest degree a historical being. He is situated in history and history is situated in him. Between man and history, there exists such a deep, mysterious, primordial and coherent relationship, such a concrete interdependence, that a divorce between them is impossible. It is as impossible to detach man from history and to consid-

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2 V.V. Zenkovskii, Istoriya filosofii, Leningrad 1991, t.1. ch.1 p. 16-17.

3 N.A. Berdyaev, Smysl istorii. M., 1990, p. 4.

4 N.P. Poltorackii, Berdyaev i Rossiya: (Filosofiya istorii Rossii u N. A. Berdyaeva) Nyu-Iork, 1967, p. 9.

er him abstractly as it is to detach history from man and to examine it from without, from a non-human point of view." [5]

Following this view, Berdyaev criticizes all those conceptions of the philosophy of history which confront man with history, and see in man only the mere means for realizing "higher" historical goals, or which undermine the significance and importance of the historical, and emphasize that it represents merely a civilizational delusion that disables true insight into man's true *humanitas*, advocating for a return to the "authentic", socially and historically uncorrupted "natural man", as Rousseau proclaims in his retrospective utopia of homo naturel. The historical process is inseparable from the destiny of man, and the philosophy of history, according to Berdyaev, should precisely strengthen their mutual conditionality.

To understand N. Berdyaev's philosophy of history, it is necessary to primarily determine the meaning of two key concepts that we often find in his texts, titles of articles and books, which are of fundamental importance in his thought. These concepts are "meaning"[6] and "destiny". Whilst the concept of "meaning" suggests Berdyaev's religious position, and his belief in the non-autarchic nature of the external world, the concept of "destiny" speaks of the existential dimension of his philosophy of history, and its orientation to personhood.[7] Before answering the question of what is the meaning of history and what is the destiny of humanity in it, we will briefly refer to the metaphysical assumptions of his philosophical conception.

1. Metaphysical assumptions of philosophy of history N. Berdyaev

Whilst interpreting the whole edifice of existence, Berdyaev commences from Kantian positions, accepting the existence of "the highest reality" (things in themselves) and phenomena (the world around us). According to him, this ontological dualism manifests itself in the form of a juxtaposition of spirit and nature. The true reality is Spirit, "heavenly history", and the Kantian "world of phenomena", according to Berdyaev, is given as "the world of objectifications", which is something opposite and alien to the spirit. Man belongs to two worlds at the same time. We are "the children of two worlds" (Bulgakov) or "the citizens of two worlds" (Gadamer) and this is exactly why man occupies a special position in the cosmos: he is "the crown of being" and the very image and likeness of God. Even though Berdyaev does not deny theistic creationism[*], i.e. God as the demiurge of the world and humankind, he nevertheless believes that there is an equally eternal primordial abyss —

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5 N.A. Berdyaev, Smysl istorii, Parizh, 1969, p. 23.

6 T.V. Maksimenko, one of the researchers of N. Berdyaev's philosophical work, believes that the category "meaning" shows the mutual connection between two worlds and expresses the religious character of Berdyaev's philosophy (Cf. Maksimenko T.V. Problema kultury i civilizacii v socialnoi filosofii N.A.Berdyaeva. Avtoref. dis. kand. filos. nauk. Tula, 1996).

7 Cf. O.D. Volkogonova Intellektualnaya biografiya N.A. Berdyaeva, M., 2001, p. 59.

* On the metaphysical level, in Berdyaev's thought there is no absolute person as primordial foundation of the world and as source of all creation. There is something impersonal beyond God, something God cannot come to terms with in a definitive sense.

Ungrund, and that creation remains unfinished. The entire existence has its ontological foundation not only in divine creation but also in primordial reality of the abyss which he names "pure freedom", "the eye of eternity", "Nothing". It represents a certain spontaneous reality superior even to the divine, since it possesses the power of theogony. Ungrund is the source of existence of God himself. At hand we have a kind of theogonic process. In Berdyaev's conception, "Nothing", as a "groundless ground" and as an absolutely autonomous principle, independent of God, represents the *conditio sine qua non* of "salvation" of human freedom. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are eternally born from the primordial abyss, pure freedom, whilst the abyss, Ungrund, is not assimilated at all or transformed in any of the three hypostases, but continues to coexist autonomously with God. Berdyaev claims that: "Freedom is the metaphysical ground of history".[8]

In Berdyaev's conception, there is a kind of inversion of the apophatic principle, which appears in Eastern patrology as *principium cognoscendi*, into a hypostatized *principium essendi* that he elevates to the rank of the ultimate principle, and he interprets it in a ontological way.[9]

Following the Christian view of the world, *fons et origo* of history is the divine. It is conceived in the bosom of the Absolute. However, God needs man as his Other, he needs his response, i.e. his love. According to Berdyaev, the relationship between God and his Otherness represents "a drama of freedom, a drama of love". Terrestrial history has its archetype in heavenly history and is determined by it. History is created from that connection between heavenly and terrestrial history. That connection is manifested in the form of a struggle of the eternal with the temporal. In history the eternal manifests itself in the temporal. However, the goal of history is not only the manifestation of the eternal, i.e. heavenly history, but also the overcoming of time and of everything temporal. The past, present, and future as ecstasies of time are overcome in "unique whole all-unity" or eternity. The life of Christ and his destiny are the paradigm of such a connection, which is why Berdyaev considers that history without Christ is incomprehensible. "History moves towards the fact — (of the repeated, R.G.) appearance of Christ and begins with the fact of Christ's appearance".[10] This is the alpha and omega of history, its central event. And, only in virtue of this the reflection of our finitude and our historical consciousness become possible: "the concepts of eternity and finitude whose correlative acts give birth to awareness of choice, the tragic awareness of freedom that constitutes history itself" become clear to us only because of it.[11]

He named the heavenly history "a prologue in Heaven" of what is then revealed in the earthly destiny of man and mankind. This is not only about some divine history, but also about the inner life of the spirit. He says: "Heaven and the heavenly life in which the historical process originates constitute the deepest interior spiritual life. For heaven is not

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8 N.A. Berdyaev, Smysl istorii, M., 1990, p. 72.

9 Cf. Razgovor o Berdyaeve (kruglyi stol), Beseda. Religiozno-filosofskii zhurnal Leningrad-Parizh, 1990, p. 195.

10 Ibid, p. 27.

11 A.A. Isaev, Ontologiya istoricheskogo bytiya v filosofii istorii N. A. Berdyaeva, Veche. Almanah russkoi filosofii i kultury vypusk 13, SPb, 2002, p. 115.

a remote transcendent and unattainable sphere; it is a part of the inmost depths of our spiritual life. When we dive below the surface and penetrate into these depths we then really commune with heavenly life. In them is stored a spiritual experience which differs from that of earthly reality".[12]

The philosophy of history, which in Berdyaev's opinion is the same as "historical knowledge", i.e. the "metaphysics of history", aims at understanding the spiritual reality, since the historical, which he speaks of, represents by itself a spiritual reality, "a particular stage of existence". Berdyaev distinguishes two aspects of history: conservative and creative. The conservative aspect speaks about the continuity of historical events, the necessary connection of historical events with the past, i.e. with tradition. The creative aspect points to the dynamism of history and the creative impulses within it that result in the completion and overcoming of it. The possibility of completing the historical process implies the question of its meaning and telos. "Historical catastrophes and changes" only stimulate and provoke our consciousness to reflectively consider the historical movement and the meaning of history. According to Berdyaev, not only history but historical science as well arise from *the feeling of catastrophism*. However, historical science cannot answer the question of the meaning of history.

Therefore, to truly understand history means to understand it in the form of *noumenon*. Although the phenomenal (history of events, historical facticity, that which constitutes the subject-matter of historical science, empirical data, "historicism", historiography) represents an aspect of the noumenal and meta-historical that is "beyond all the historical", it cannot exhaust the meaning of history: for it remains incomprehensible to it. The essence and meaning of the historical become transparent to us only *sub specie aeternitatis*, i.e. through the eyes of the Spirit. The *interference between man's inner spiritual life and the divine* does exist. History has its origin not only in the Absolute but also in the hidden depths of the human spirit, i.e. not only God but also man predestines his earthly destiny and the destiny of humanity. Berdyaev says: "For history is not only the plan of the Divine revelation, it is also the reciprocal revelation of man himself... That makes history such a terrible and complex tragedy".[13]

The human being is "the manifestation" of the spirit, and the spirit establishes its superiority and reality through the human being. The spirituality of man is *fundamentum inconcussum* and a testimony to the existence of God. The very presence of the spirit in man is the greatest ontological proof of the existence of God. At the heart of the historical process lies not only the divine element but also the uncreated freedom that has nothing in common with God, since it is "rooted in Nothing".

2. The idea of the eschatological sense of history

Berdyaev constantly insists on the *noumenal character of the historical*, pointing out that it is "the most radical hypothesis of the philosophy of history" and that " 'the historical' is by its nature deeply ontological in its essence... It has roots in some deepest primal ground of

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[12] N.A. Berdyaev, Smysl istorii, M., 1990, p. 55.
[13] Ibid, p. 71.

being, bringing us into communion with it and making it knowable... The 'historical' is a revelation of noumenal reality".[14]

Therefore, besides its chthonic earthly path, history has its hidden, *eschatological*, i.e. *meta-historical* goal, which manifests itself in earthly history, enlightens it and directs its way. According to Berdyaev, this meaning is revealed in moving towards the Kingdom of God. History is a process of God-mankind.

The fundamental historiosophical conclusion reached by Berdyaev in his observations regarding the essence and meaning of history, can be briefly summarized by the following standpoint: human history has no meaning in and by itself, but only beyond itself, that is, it has a meta-historical, eschatological meaning that implies its end and completion. It cannot be reached in an evolutionary way, i.e. by the gradual improvement of a human's terrestrial existence. "The meaning of history is beyond the confines of history, and meaning because it presupposes an end... History has meaning because it comes to an end. A history with no end would be meaningless. Infinite progress is meaningless. For this reason, the true philosophy of history is the eschatological philosophy of history: it represents the understanding of the historical process in the light of its end, and contains a prophetic element within itself".[15]

In another place, he argues likewise: "The philosophy of history is inextricably linked to eschatology. Without the idea of a historical ending, there is no understanding of history, because history is eschatological in its essence".[16]

According to Berdyaev, the end of history exists, however, that end should not be understood as the end in historical time. The empirical history of events is nothing more than a world of objectification, a world of phenomena alienated from their own noumenal source. Therefore, in Berdyaev's words, it represents "a failure of the spirit" that must be overcome by the penetration of the meta-historical into real history, which is achieved by the creative acts of that same spirit and which at the same time signifies the return of the noumenal into the phenomenal world, i.e. its eschatological transformation.

In other words, history in its earthly form will exist until the Kingdom of God comes, as a result of the second coming of Christ. The meaning and telos of history are represented by the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth, which we cannot grasp in a discursive way. It remains a mystery to us. In this way, the problem of the relationship between man and history is solved only by eschatology, i.e. the philosophy of history as the teaching about the hidden meaning of history that is not revealed through progress, but through its end, in eternity. "Historical knowledge and philosophy are not essentially focused on the empirical: they have afterlife for their object".[17]

With this view, Berdyaev transcends the hypostatized boundary between the immanent and transcendent horizons of historical existence. Therefore, history in its essence, ac-

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14 Ibid, p. 15.

15 N.A. Berdyaev, Samopoznanie M., 1991, p. 343-344.

16 Ibid, p. 17.

17 N.A. Berdyaev, Smysl istorii, M., 1990, p. 26.

cording to Berdyaev, is *the path to another and different world*, the path to a higher reality that is above and beyond the boundaries of everything historical, that is, in the meta-historical and noumenal. From the metaphysical aspect, the end of history represents *the overcoming of objectification*. Berdyaev's eschatologically conceptualized philosophy of history ("History must have its end. The meaning of history is linked to eschatology".[18]) radiates a kind of metaphysical optimism, since it assumes the possibility of overcoming the finitude of human existence, that is, the possibility of changing its ontological destiny.

Following the development of Berdyaev's historiosophical views, it can be noticed that eschatological and apocalyptic moments increasingly came to the fore. For example, in his work *The Meaning of History*, he says that history is always imbued with tragedy and that it has a tragic epilogue. He rejects the naïve positivist and utopian conception of history as historical progress, which rests on the rationalist delusion of the continuous progress and moral perfection of humanity throughout history with a futuristic happy ending as its immanent and expected finale. "There is no ... progress of goodness in history, and no progress in human happiness. There is only a tragic and increased revealing of the inner principles of existence, the revealing of the most contradictory principles...The greatest inner meaning of the historical destiny of humanity lies in their demonstration".[19] Human history is antinomical and the historical process is catastrophical because it has to end, i.e. "the world cannot exist eternally". However, man is not only a passive observer but an active actor in the historical process. In the spirit of existentialism, Berdyaev insists on the historical activism of man. Man creates history, it is always "his history": it is he who is the creator and accomplice of it.

According to Berdyaev, it is possible to overcome the tragedy and antinomy of the historical only by a dialectical religious-eschatological synthesis. For example, he resolves the antinomy of freedom and necessity by the concept of grace, the contradiction of temporal ecstasies, i.e. "bad" and "good" time by the concept of eternity. He later radicalized this view in the section of his book *An Essay on Eschatological Metaphysics* entitled "The Problem of History and Eschatology" by introducing the standpoint that metaphysics "inevitably becomes eschatology".[20]

Thus, eschatology constitutes the inner logic and telos of metaphysics. It fills history with meaning and determines the personal destiny of the human being.

3. The apocalyptic vision of history

The apocalyptic elements in Berdyaev's philosophy of history are closely linked wito his eschatology, that is to his teaching about the end of history. However, Berdyaev's interpretation of the end of the world is essentially different from the Christian understanding of that fateful and final act of history. "An eschatological interpretation of the Kingdom of God is the only true one. But the paradox of eschatological consciousness is that end is not

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[18] N.A. Berdyaev, Moe filosofskoe mirosozercanie // Filosofskie nauki. 1990, № 6, p. 88.
[19] Ibid, p. 150.
[20] N.A. Berdyaev, Opyt eshatologicheskoi metafiziki, Parizh, 1947, p. 199.

only deferred to an indefinite time in the future but, at the same time, remains close to every moment of our life. There is an eschatology within the process of life. Apocalypse is not merely the revelation of the end of the world and of history. It is also the revelation of the end within the world and the historical process, within human life and every moment of our life. It is particularly important to rise above a passive interpretation of the Apocalypse as the expectation of the end and of the last Judgement. It is possible to interpret it actively as a call to creative activity, to heroic effort and achievement".[21] He abandons the dogmatic, Christian understanding of eschatology as a passive "world-denying expectation of the end of the world" according to which it signifies "the catastrophe of our earthly existence". Rather, following in tracks of Solovyov's thought, he argues that it is a long-term process in which humanity as a whole must be included, and which by virtue of its own creative acts should win its own universal salvation, the essence of which is contained in *the religious transformation of existence en block*.

Therefore, Berdyaev explains: "Apocalypse is not only a revelation of the end of the world, a vision of the last judgement. Apocalypse is also the revelation of the ever present closeness of the end within history itself, within time which is still historical, an exposure of the failure of history. In our sinful, evil world an uninterrupted gradual development is impossible. In it much evil, much poison is always accumulating. In it processes of dissolution are always going on".[22]

The idea of the end of history, its catastrophic end after which "new heaven and a new earth" appear, that is a definite and complete transformation of the world and humankind, gives history "inner meaning", "inner plan" or "inner realization".

According to Berdyaev, historical events and history as a whole are meaningless without this apocalyptic moment. It is impossible to determine the meaning within history. The philosophy of history only points out and strengthens the antinomies of the historical process, the solution of which lies beyond the temporal and the historical. It is, in a sense, teleological, since the meaning of history can only be grasped after its completion. "The meaning does not indicate the result but it indicates, above all, 'the review', 'the panorama' of the historical".[23] From the abovementioned, we can conclude that the motivational background, the essential feature and the most profound predetermination of all Berdyaev's philosophizing, including the historiosophical, are represented by non-reconciliation with the fact of our finality and mortality, non-acceptance of a human being's death, or, more precisely, its overcoming. The idea of man's natural immortality that is derived from the substantiality and permanence of the soul, and that has its origin and foundation in Plato's *Phaedo*, is controversial, because it calmly stays silent about the dramatism of death.

According to Berdyaev, the immortality of a human is not a divine gift, nor an innate feature of the soul, but it is something that has to be conquered and acquired. To fight against death and to defeat it in the name of eternal life spells out the basic task of man

21 N.A. Berdyaev, O naznachenii cheloveka, Parizh, 1931, p. 22.

22 N.A. Berdyaev, Istoki i smysl russkogo kommunizma. M., 1990, p. 107.

23 A. V. Malinov, Filosofiya istorii v Rossii: Konspekt universitetskogo speckursa, SPb. 2001, p. 142.

and at the same time the true meaning of his existence. Russian religious philosophy promotes, in the character and work of its most prominent representatives, a new "more humane" humanism, the essence of which is contained in the request *to free man from the fear of God and the fear of death*.

Regardless of the apocalyptic view of history and the eschatological perspective of its end, Berdyaev was convinced in the possibility of overcoming the contradictions on the historical level. Following the whole tradition of Russian religious philosophy, he saw the power of salvation in love. It is possible to overcome slavery and achieve freedom only with the help of it.

It is the driving force of human existence and the source of all creativity. Therefore, it is not surprising that the concept of Eros runs like a red thread through all Berdyaev's works.[24]

Once again, with his oeuvre he magnificently confirmed all the depth and truthfulness of the cardinal intuition of Russian religious and philosophical thought that "God is love and man is love" (B.P. Vysheslavtsev).

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24 Cf. N.A. Berdyaev Eros i Lichnost/ Sost. i vstup. Statya V. P. Shestakova M., 1989

In Memoriam

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Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Werner Beierwaltes
(8. 5. 1931 – 22. 2. 2019)

Werner Beierwaltes hat sich als Philosophiehistoriker vor allem um die Erforschung des Neuplatonismus und seiner reichhaltigen Wirkungsgeschichte verdient gemacht. Dabei sollte aber nicht übersehen werden, dass seiner Arbeit als Philologe und Historiker eine genuin philosophische Dimension zugrunde gelegen hat. Sie wird in der Konzentration auf philosophische Sachfragen erkennbar, die zugleich dazu dient, das entscheidende Merkmal philosophischer Diskussion zu veranschaulichen, profiliert diese doch ihren eigenen Gedanken nicht allein aus sich selbst, sondern in der Kritik und in produktiver Modifikation von Alternativen. Werner Beierwaltes war davon überzeugt, dass ein philosophischer Gedanke unabhängig davon, wann und unter welchen Bedingungen er gedacht worden ist, zur Diskussion über das in ihm Festgehaltene auch dann Beachtung verdient, wenn diese Diskussion unter anderen Voraussetzungen stattfindet und deshalb auch gegenüber dem Vorgegebenen andere Wege geht. Die Zeit, aus und in der gedacht wird, war für ihn nie die Grenze des Gedachten. Vielmehr wollte er deutlich machen, dass einmal Gedachtes in und aus anderer Zeit neu gedacht werden kann, und zwar durch produktive Aneignung, bei der das Gedachte und das zu Denkende aneinander ‚gerieben' werden, um sich gegenseitig zu beleuchten. Nur wenn bewusst bleibt, dass der eigene Gedanke von sich aus des selbstkritisch verstehenden Blicks auf seine Geschichte bedarf, besteht die Chance, ein Problem zu erhellen, das zu anderer Zeit unter anderen Voraussetzungen und deshalb auch anders gedacht worden ist.

Das genuin philosophische Interesse von Werner Beierwaltes wird noch deutlicher, wenn man auf die besonderen Schwerpunkte seiner Arbeit achtet. Der Neuplatonismus hat ihn angezogen, weil dieser seinem Selbstverständnis nach die Synthese der gesamten antiken Philosophie und zugleich die Summe einer Weisheit darstellt, die ihren Ausdruck auch im Mythos und in der Dichtung gefunden hat. Insbesondere Plotin und Proklos stehen für den Versuch, eine ‚uranfängliche Weisheit' in die begrifflich komplexe Sprache einer Gegenwart zu übersetzen, die den Zugang zu ihr und zu der in ihr festgehaltenen ‚regu-

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la vitae' zu verlieren droht. Zugleich steht der Neuplatonismus für den Übergang in eine neue Epoche; nur er konnte eine Sprache entwickeln, die es dem sich ausbreitenden Christentum ermöglicht hat, sich mit sich selbst über die eigene auf Offenbarung gegründete Lehre zu verständigen und sie für Menschen erreichbar zu machen, die anders als die historischen Adressaten der Lehre Jesu im Horizont spätantiker Kultur aufgewachsen waren. Die Übersetzung des Christentums in den Platonismus bzw. des Platonismus ins Christentum erscheint so als spannungsreiche Synthese von Theologie und Philosophie, die nach der Überzeugung von Werner Beierwaltes auch heute noch zeigen kann, dass religiöser Glaube und philosophisches Wissen keine unvereinbaren Gegensätze sind. Vielmehr sieht er sie in ihrer Unterschiedlichkeit auf ein gemeinsames Ziel bezogen, insofern sie beide den Grund für ein Leben legen wollen, das im griechisch-philosophischen Sinne ‚gut' und zugleich aus der Perspektive der *doctrina christiana* ‚gerechtfertigt' genannt werden darf. In dem Gedanken, dass Leben Autonomie bedeutet, sich aber zugleich von einer Macht getragen weiß, die ihm selbst unverfügbar ist, treffen sich nach seiner Überzeugung die besten Gestalten platonisch inspirierter Philosophie und christlich geprägter Theologie. Von daher ist es stimmig, dass die Epochenschwelle des Übergangs vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit ebenso im Zentrum seines Interesses stand wie der insbesondere von Hegel und Schelling vorangetriebene Versuch, die Epoche der Moderne und die für sie charakteristischen Brüche mit den begrifflichen Mittel einer Philosophie zu verstehen, die sich ihrer selbst in der bewussten Weiterführung eines im Wesentlichen von Platon, Aristoteles und dem Neuplatonismus begründeten Denkens versichern wollte. Es ging Beierwaltes also vor allem einen umfassend klärenden Blick auf Situationen, in denen die Philosophie gezwungen war, sich kritisch auf sich selbst und ihre eigene Geschichte zu besinnen, um Krisen bewältigen zu können, in denen, wie auch in unserer Zeit, zu zerbrechen drohte, was zuvor mehr oder weniger selbstverständlich Einheit zu sein schien.

Der Titel seines Buches „Denken des Einen", 1991 mit dem Kuno-Fischer-Preis der Universität Heidelberg ausgezeichnet, kann das philosophisch-systematische Interesse von Werner Beierwaltes exemplarisch umschreiben. Dass sich das Denken einer unbestimmbaren Mannigfaltigkeit von Formen und Gegenständen öffnen und sich so in nahezu unbegrenzter Vielheit verwirklichen kann, ist eine Trivialität. Schwieriger sind die Fragen, inwieweit die Gegenstände des Denkens, vor allem aber die Modi seiner selbst Einheit sind und wie dann Einheit als solche zu denken ist. Der Versuch, sie als die Voraussetzung zu verstehen, von der aus sich dem Denken die Vielheit des Gedachten und die seiner eigenen Formen als Einheit erschließen kann, treibt das Denken an die Grenze seiner Möglichkeiten und zwingt es letztlich dazu, sich auf eine Voraussetzung einzulassen, die es nicht in seiner eigenen Verfügung hat. Dem Gespür für diese immanente Selbstherausforderung der Philosophie entsprach bei Werner Beierwaltes eine Sensibilität insbesondere für solche Werke der Kunst, in denen sie im Element sinnlich nachvollziehbarer Darstellung zur Reflexion über die Formen wird, mit denen diese den Zusammenhang eines Ganzen in vielfach gebrochener und damit begrifflich unauslotbarer Einheit zur Anschauung zu bringen sucht. Aus diesem Impuls hat der Verstorbene gedacht und gelebt und damit jeden bereichert, der hörend, diskutierend oder lesend mit ihm und seinem Denken in Verbindung getreten ist.

Werner Beierwaltes wurde am 8. Mai 1931 in Klingenberg geboren. Vom Wintersemester 1950 an hat er an der Münchener Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Klassische Philologie, Philosophie und Germanistik studiert. 1957 wurde er mit einer vom Gräzisten Rudolf Pfeiffer betreuten Arbeit über die Lichtmetaphorik der Griechen zum Dr. phil. promoviert. Nach der Referendarzeit in München und Landshut war er Assistent von Rudolph Berlinger an der Julius-Maximilians-Universität in Würzburg. Dort wurde er 1963 mit einer Arbeit zur Metaphysik des Neuplatonikers Proklos im Fach Philosophie habilitiert. 1969 wurde er an die Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität in Münster, 1974 an die Albert-Ludwigs-Universität in Freiburg und 1982 an die Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in München berufen. Dort war er bis zu seiner Emeritierung 1996 Ordinarius am Institut für Philosophie. Seit 1974 war er Mitglied der Nordrhein-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste in Düsseldorf, seit 1986 ordentliches Mitglied der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften und seit 1996 Mitglied der Akademie gemeinnütziger Wissenschaften zu Erfurt. Außerdem war er Vorsitzender der Cusanus-Kommission der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Ehrenmitglied der Royal Irish Academy in Dublin und korrespondierendes Mitglied der Accademia Senese degli Intronati. Weitere Anerkennungen seiner Tätigkeit waren der Kuno-Fischer-Preis der Universität Heidelberg (1991), der Reuchlin-Preis der Stadt Pforzheim (1993), das Verdienstkreuz 1. Klasse des Verdienstordens der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (1998), der Bayerische Verdienstorden (2002). Er war außerdem Träger des Premio Roncesvalles de Filosofia der Universität von Navarra und Ehrendoktor der Universität Ioannina (Griechenland).

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BOOK REVIEW

Philipp W. Rosemann, *Charred Root of Meaning: Continuity, Transgression, and the Other in Christian Tradition,* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018, 242 pp.

"The Christian tradition unfolds around powerful, awesome irruptions of the divine whose agent keeps withdrawing. Its root is charred. In its most basic sense, the Christian tradition is an attempt to remember what happened, handing it down from generation to generation." (*Charred Root of Meaning*, 143)

1. Philipp W. Rosemann's strikingly titled study *Charred Root of Meaning* represents a most solid exploration of Tradition. The matured ease with which the tradition of western spirituality, theology and philosophy is examined and brought to fresh illumination bears exemplary value. Exciting readings of perplexing events and referential texts are brought forth, unceasingly, in bouquets of lucid conceptual insights. Rosemann's re-writing, or, re-telling of the narrative of tradition is markedly informed by telling details in which much is hidden, then revealed, as well. It is not only the impressive scholarly import of Rosemann's hermeneutical reflections that grounds the main contribution of this study. For, he promotes a discipline of history of ideas which is engaged in tradition in a protective way, from within. His theoretical involvement in tradition signals an eminently practical interest, in the regulative sense. This study is both a rewarding handbook of case studies in the history of re-receptions of the texts of tradition, and, equally, an important theoretical statement of the first order. The scope of the study is opened by looking at the "constitution and historical unfolding of the Christian tradition" (198). The main intention, notably, is to "remind the Christian tradition of its transgressive core" (200) whilst, at the same time, to procure "a corrective to the cult of transgression that pervades contemporary culture" (200).

Rosemann compellingly demonstrates the constitutive status of the former, viz. the transgressiveness of tradition, and, lends convincing power to informed questioning of the latter, viz. the uncritical transgressivism of modern and postmodern, i.e. contemporary culture, academic and popular alike. These two dimensions reflect the first and second part of this remarkable study. In part one (chapters 1-3, 25-103) we are presented with the emergence of tradition itself, with poignant reminders of the irreducibly transgressive character of tradition. This is achieved through a structural analysis of the constitutive givens of tradition (in a hermeneutical-phenomenological reduction of sorts to the core phenomena): irruption of the divine, transgression, limit, fulfillment (104). In part two (chapters 4-6, 104-197) we are presented with intricate dynamic ways tradition is kept: limited and delimited, affirmed and brought into question and re-affirmed, again. Part two also offers the argued fact that transgressions in culture, varied and disparate as they may be, draw upon a presupposed tradition, Christian or other. Throughout, the analysis of the structural logic of tradition is stringently informed by deep hermeneutical awareness of the horizon of history as itself a given which mediates tradition. The main operative thesis of the study is spelled out clearly: "tradition and transgression, far from excluding each other, are inextricably connected" (198). It is the linchpin holding both parts of the monograph together. As the study unfolds the Christian and non-Christian reader become aware of the moment of humorous surprise to find that, volens-nolens, they are working out

of transgression *and* affirmation of tradition, which in turn is enigmatically transgressive itself, in a qualified sense.

2. As of *Part I* in chapter **1** ("The Irruption of the Divine" 25-50) we are reminded that the received self-sameness of the voice of tradition stems from a most radical otherness, where the divine Other, remaining irreducible to any stabilized sameness, chooses to touch humanity (which establishes the paradox of sameness-in-difference). In the encounter with Moses on Mt Sinai it is God himself who is the transgressive agency par excellence, but so is Moses. We also find that the establishment of the faith of the Israelites, through Moses' encounter with God, is transgressive in regard to all hitherto known types of gods, and, that Christian exegesis of that event is transgressive in regard to Hebrew codes of interpretation of the biblical events depicting the instilment of the Law (e.g. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite's *Mystical Theology*, and Pseudo-Peter of Poitiers' biblical-exegetical views, including his introductory take on Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences*).

In chapter **2** ("The Incarnate God as the New Moses" 51-76) we are reminded of the Gospel by Matthew (Matt. 5-7) which points to Jesus as the Son of God incarnate who exemplifies the most eminent transgression imaginable, whereby God becomes his other, Man, in and through the person of Jesus Christ, the Godman. This most radical overstepping of boundaries and limits, moreover, reverberates in a series of other revolutionary transgressions, especially in regard to the subversion of Hebrew Law by *fulfilling* it (59-61 et passim) by means of divine-human charity, exemplified in yet another subversion: namely, that of power issuing forth from the brokenness of God's Son in the crushing humiliation of the expiatory Cross.

In chapter **3** ("The Christian Tradition in the Pagan World" 77-99) by turning to St Paul and Augustine and their relations to the Judaic and Pagan life-worlds, Rosemann continues

to develop his conception of transgressive tradition. He is very careful to underline, however, that substantial universal emancipation (which is always introduced by revolutionary transgression) as by rule entails (the temptation of) exclusion of the seemingly "dated" or "problematic" other (which subverts the revolutionary potential of the authentic import of transgression, through a reactionary closure precisely in relation to the other). As Rosemann suggests, gesturing towards sublation (viz. Aufhebung) rather than depletion, what is excluded is not necessarily redundant. On the contrary, as we glean in his critique of failures of Christian tradition to properly re-evaluate the worthies of the traditions of Judaism or of Classic paganism in their own right. Something worthy always remains in the other's cultural contribution. Everything bears the touch of God. The significance of a Greek temple or of Jewish scriptures is not exhausted in being "merely" a preparation for, or sign of the Christian temple or the Church's scripture (74-75). "Despoliation" of the goods of others, Pagan or Jewish (93-94), if truly revolutionary, steers away from the temptation to view them condescendingly (94), as remnants of the totally superseded otherness of others. Inasmuch, Rosemann "gives back" the spoils appropriated. By doing so, he despoils them anew, taking them to a level of greater broadness of meaning, more inclusively (the Greeks, Egyptians, and Jews cannot be all that "illiterate" after all).

As of *Part II* after a welcome summation of Part I (100-103), in chapter **4** ("The Unfolding of the Christian Tradition" 104-132) the motif of the subversive subsistence of the other is developed further, through an important insight. Namely, it is part and parcel of tradition's own transgressiveness to acknowledge and appropriate what is seemingly other to it: both the plurality of its own historical forms (tied as they are to the pre-original impetus of authenticity of what it reveals foundationally) and imports of other traditions as well. This remembering of *itself* as well as re-

membering of tradition's *others* (112-113) is not easy to accomplish, it is not always the case, and cannot be taken for granted. Three paradigmatic figures are brought forth to illustrate, each in a particular way, this struggle against the ossifying work of non-authentic sameness which comes to dissipate and suffocate tradition, paradoxically, in the very attempt of re-asserting its authority, or vital longevity. Firstly, Denys the Carthusian who (viz. "the 'other' Dionysius, the Pseudo-Areopagite" and Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences* [112]) attempts to unearth the original meaning of tradition hidden, and forgotten, under masses of historical commentary. Secondly, Alaisdair MacIntyre whose theory of tradition is evoked helpfully with regard to the problem of "epistemological crisis", which teaches that one tradition needs to open itself to another, even rival tradition "... that may possess the concepts and intellectual strategies it needs to overcome the epistemological crisis" (116) in order to avoid decline and defeat, through "imaginative conceptual innovation" (MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which rationality?* 1988, 362). Such was the case when (in times of dogmatic crisis and ecclesial intellectual strife) the Church reached out (in "self-transgressing") towards pagan Greek philosophy. Rosemann makes sure, yet again, to subvert the fallacious notion of tradition as a smooth uninterrupted chain of transmissions of one unquestioned as much as self-same voice. It is here that MacIntyre's theory of tradition is used as a projection lens for the recent statement made by the Pontifical Biblical Commission. Most significantly, the Commission concedes that the Jewish tradition should be respected as a "self-contained piece of God's revelation" (118). Thirdly, Rosemann points to Jerome's translation of the Bible (121-126), making another major point. Translations not only format whole cultures for centuries (as did the Vulgate or translations of Muslim Arabic works on Aristotle), but, translating as such is often transgressive. The receptor language often-

times needs to be violated and "bent in the direction of its source" (199). Being reminded of that helps us remember that an ethic of willingness to be shaped by the other needs to be constantly retrieved in authentic understandings of the tradition we stand for.

In chapter **5** ("Folding Back the Tradition" 133-164) Rosemann points to the inevitability of forgetting, and takes it for another generator of the transgressive reflex of tradition. That is to say, at a given point in epochal time tradition remembers its own forgetfulness, to wit, "that it could have taken another path". Therefrom issues the need for deep, in effect transgressive, re-examinations of the one path hitherto taken which in the meanwhile has set boundaries which serve tradition no longer or partially: "... when the tradition runs into difficulties as a result of its choices, it may have to 'unbuild', to destruct, layers of transmission in order to uncover some of (its) crossroads and reexamine seemingly past possibilities" (199). Accordingly, Luther and Heidegger are taken as instances in which tradition came back on itself in order to remember, uncover (viz. alethein) and see something essential as much as lacking, be it a more fundamental aspect of the holy scriptures (as in Luther's insistence on reading the scripture from within a theology of the Cross, 146-150, 155, 164 et passim]) or a more fundamental dimension of being (as in Heidegger's unearthing of the ontological difference, viz. non-objectified meanings of being expounded in his subversion of ontotheology [154-156, 158-164 et passim]). If Rosemann's mediation of tradition and transgression has led us to think that he champions an overly relaxed conception of tradition, one in which all transgressions are equal or equally welcome, then we are mistaken.

Chapter **6** ("A Genealogy of Transgression" 165-197) goes quite a way in reassuring the reader that a criterion of evaluation of tradition in fact exists, and, that transgressions of it may (should) come under scrutiny (thence the Nietzschean pun in the chapter

title, ironically reversed to tackle transgression on its own terms). To this end the author gestures towards the limits of de-limiting the strictures of the original tradition's self-understanding. He convincingly demonstrates how Kant's reading of the meaning of the Genesis narrative of the primordial fall represents a gross misinterpretation of the ur-transgression. Kant "de-evils what Genesis represents as evil and forbidden, namely, the human attempt to reach godlike autonomy" (180). In similar vein, yet with stakes of transgression raised to the maximum of explicit taboo-breaking, Rosemann shifts from the modern to the postmodern field as he looks at another failed attempt at transgressing. This time it is the field of avant-garde art with Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* (1987) taken not only as blasphemy (although ambivalent) but as the self-negating instance of endless as much as self-serving progress in transgression (186-188, 194-197). In both cases these transgressions (modern and postmodern) seem failed because, as Rosemann suggests, they disregard the bulwark of the pre-original Tradition: in the name of "originality" (195), driven by the self-validating or self-affirmative subject. "For modernity, to be human means to transgress existing limits, to expand the horizon of knowledge—or of artistic possibility... But these horizons keep receding..." (195). In (post)modernity this cult of transgression exhausts its potential. Where subversion is the étable code which defines a culture, where it feeds on itself (in form of schlechte Ewigkeit), concrete instantiations of subversive transgression, paradoxically, neutralize themselves. As regards the criterion of evaluating tradition, Rosemann advances determined to take what is revealed "literally" (solemnly), yet with a most sophisticated non-naïveté to protect his discernments. In the Conclusion (198-200) to this elegant and eloquent, orienting, study on tradition — which represents a vivifying retrieval of it as well, Rosemann capitalizes his hermeneutical endeavours (the following words cover not only art but all manner of theoretical practices, philosophical and theological notwithstanding):

> "... transgressive art derives its meaning from the tradition it subverts; once there is nothing left to subvert, transgression becomes an empty exercise, pathetically spinning out of control as it chases after ever new limits to conquer. Playing in the margins of cultural norms is fun—and has a real function—only as long as there is a center" (200).

3. Rosemann doesn't venture to claim this "center" should be understood in terms of any hypostatised authority, ecclesial or other. He doesn't claim there is a center in terms of monistic centrality of a pre-supposed absolute. What he in fact suggests, discretely yet powerfully, is that the center's "oneness" is to be sought in the richness of the irreducibly pluralized historical dynamic of *tradition* in toto, rather than in one given dogmatic path. Rosemann's re-appropriations of tradition's authentic catholicity, in terms of sound and meaningful understandings of the workings of its pre-original core(s), wisely left apophatically "open", are expounded without confessionalist insistence. Yet his catholic affinities (for instance, affirmed in referencing the cannon of selected texts themselves) shine through his vision and interpretive endeavours.

On a more general note, this work may be regarded as a *Studienhandbuch* in the philosophy of religion, religiology and in Christian philosophy, and in ways philosophical methods need to be utilized in appropriating the biblical texts. For it brings out indisputably actualized analyses of the structures, domains and functions in which these, in their specific ways, contribute to the spiritual humaniora. In more specific terms, Rosemann's lasting achievement rests in a cluster of significant reminders: (i) tradition is transgressive in itself; (ii) there is a tradition of transgression kept by tradition; (iii) meaningfully authentic transgressions presuppose complex ties with tradition; (iv) there is a limit to mean-

ingful delimitation viz. the cult of self-serving transgression; (v) tradition is the catholic act itself of remembering that we may never totally posses nor perfectly represent our essential Other, which actually allows us to receive more of the Other: "The Lord's presence is always veiled, a re-presentation, a memory at risk of slipping away" (143).

As the reader will discern already in the Introduction ("Break on through [to the Other Side]" 1-24), Rosemann promotes a theologically informed philosophy of remembrance: poised against both oblivion of tradition and against tradition's own oblivion of its transgressive constituent. Remembrance, then, is the condition of possibility for openness to what is other, divine, revivifying and salvifically meaningful. Consequently, Rosemann's spiritual and intellectual vision translates into a courageously faithful philosophy of tradition informed by critical postmodern sensitivities, creatively appropriated to serve a philosophy opened to, and opened by faith (for instance, postmodern deconstruction is not abused for goals of destruction, but, rather, taken to forward goals of reconstruction of meaning: Rosemann's faith-imbued Gadamerian traits and proclivities succeed in fertilizing the Foucauldian and Derridian ones, or those of MacIntyre, etc).

All of this makes the study exceptionally relevant. It not only narrates about tradition, but represents a blessed intrusion *of* tradition into our contemporary ways. The roots of this study are charred indeed. The same holds for the knowledge and wisdom it bestows upon us, generously, through a calmly diligent hand. It is to be expected that these roots, too, just like those of the sotol (Dasylirion texanum) that Rosemann refers to in the Preface (xix-xx [xix-xxii]), will proliferate, despite the odds. If it be allowed, I'd wish to complement these symbolic metaphors with those used by Sir John Betjeman to convey a quintessential aspect of (the Eastern side of) catholic tradition: namely, continuity amidst disruption:

> "Thus vigorously does the old tree grow, / By persecution pruned, watered with blood, / Its living roots deep in pre-Christian mud, / It needs no bureaucratical protection. / It is its own perpetual resurrection" (J. Betjeman, "Greek Orthodox", *London Magazine* 11:4 [1971] 54-55).

[This book is published within the Interventions series (ed. Conor Cunningham) of monographs and studies aiming at "genuinely interdisciplinary mediations of crucial concepts and key figures in contemporary thought". As such, it comes from the Centre of Theology and Philosophy at the University of Nottingham. Next to the Series Preface (ix-x) penned by Cunningham, John Milbank adds his lively, instructive and congenial Foreword (xi-xvii). The book is set in hard covers which are exquisitely adorned with a haunting image of charred woods imprinted upon the dust jacket (photo: Tawatchai Prakobkit; design: James T. Chiampas). On the reverse side of the latter we are offered compelling endorsement reflections by Bruce D. Marshall, Catherine Pickstock and William Desmond. In technical terms the monograph seems to be wholly free of errata, typographical or material. The index rerum et nominum (227-234) and index scriptorum (235-237) are most helpful; the same holds for carefully selected illustrations, ranging from a depiction of a Roman mosaic (9), title page of theological treatise (152) to medieval manuscript illuminations (32, 189). The Appendix contains Excerpts from the Pseudo-Poitiers Gloss (rendered in Rosemann's own transcription of it) and from (a rare edition of) Denys the Carthusian's *Sentences* Commentary (201-204). – Otherwise, Rosemann published these four articles in *Philotheos*: "*Sacra pagina* or *scientia divina*? Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, and the Nature of the Theological Project", 4 (2004) 284-300; "The Lutheran Heidegger: Reflections on S. J. McGrath, *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy*", 7 (2007) 327-332; "What is Philosophy?", 17 (2017) 5-17; "God and Mammon: Fundamental Structures in Georg Simmel's Philosophy of Money", 18.1 (2018) 57-77.]

Bogdan Lubardić

PHILOTHEOS

Philotheos (**Φιλόθεος**) is an international scholarly journal that provides a forum for a dialogue in philosophy and in theology respectively, with a special focus on the dialogue between the two. Founded in 2001, it brings together articles and book reviews of philosophical and theological interest in the broader Christian tradition. Contributions are published in several European languages and they cover diverse field of inquiry from antiquity to the present. The overarching goal is to overcome the disciplinarian entrenchments in philosophy and theology and reintegrate professional questions with the need to answer to problems placed before us by life itself.