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Theodor Damian, Ph.D., President
30-18 50th Street, Woodside, NY 11377, Tel.: (718) 626-6013,
E-mail: DamianTh@aol.com

Editor: Theodor Damian
Assistant to the editor and designer: Claudia Damian

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THEODOR DAMIAN

The Theme of Suffering in St. Gregory of Nazianzus´s Poetry

Abstract: When we refer to St. Gregory of Nazianzus, we think in particular of his theological writings for which he was named „The Theologian", of his fight in the defense of Christian Orthodoxy against the heresies of his time. In this perspective we see „the saint". Gregory, as a common person, however, a complicated character, unveils himself in his poetry in a different way than we are accustomed to thinking of him; in this posture he is much less known to the public.
Poetry is the place where we identify his inner life, his way to sainthood, meaning the man with his struggles, doubts, weaknesses, sufferings, temptations, problems, frustrations, indignations, depressions, faults, failures, discontents and complaints.

Keywords: Gregory of Nazianzus, illness, flesh, spirit, solitude, Christ, salvation.

Introduction

St. Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390) was a personality of first rank in the complex world of the fourth Christian century.[1] John McGuckin believes that St. Gregory was the greatest rhetor of his time,[2] whereas A. Benoit calls him one of the greatest rhetors that ever existed[3] and one of the literary giants of the Church[4] with a special vocation for poetry.

Excelling in the fields of theology, philosophy, and literature, as one of the most remarkable intellectuals of his century, St. Gregory was well known for the depths of his knowledge and for the subtlety of his philosophical and theological interpretations. He was admired,

Theodor Damian, PhD, is Professor emeritus of Human Services and Education, Metropolitan College of New York; President of the Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality, New York; President of the American Branch of the Academy of Romanian Scientists.

but also envied by his contemporaries. His poetic production was immense; towards the end of his life, in particular, he wrote over 400 poems of autobiography, theology, and history, nearly 20,000 verses - 30,000, according to other sources.[5]

Gregory as a Common Person

When referring to St. Gregory of Nazianzus, we think in particular of his theological writings, for which he was named „The Theologian", of his fight in the defense of Christian Orthodoxy against the heresies of his time. In this perspective we are seeing „the saint", Gregory, as a common person, however, a complicated character (as Brian Matz notices[6]), unveils himself in his poetry in a different way than we are accustomed to thinking of him; and this aspect of him is much less known to the public.[7]

Poetry is where we can see his inner life, his way to sainthood, that is, the man in his struggles, doubts, weaknesses, sufferings, temptations, problems, frustrations, indignations, depressions, faults, failures, discontents and complaints.

As John McGuckin comments, St. Gregory's poetry shows a man aware of his failures and shortcomings.[8] As such, he wrote poetry, among other reasons, based on an inner need for personal consolation in moments when he suffered physical pain, as he himself testifies, but also when he was overwhelmed by sadness at the thought that "an old swan" as he was, would soon have to leave this life.[9]

St. Gregory is writing about himself with an overflowing sincerity, openly, as if to someone who knows him in all aspects and details of his life, and from whom he cannot hide anything. However, it is easy to assume that, in the Saint's mind, God himself was that "someone". That is why his poetry is a type of confession and at the same time a dialogue with God. However, it is also clear that his poetical laments were meant to be left to posterity. As such, it is a kind of kenosis, of public repentance, and he is showing courage in his overwhelming sincerity, as if saying: this is me, just the way you see me, and what you don't see, I will tell you. The great theologian shows us a total assumption of his physical and spiritual states. That is why in the poem *On his troubles* he can write with surprising detachment: "I will expose my misery in front of all."[10]

With a visible Platonic influence - according to which there is a total difference between body and soul as far as their nature is concerned, and based on which the body, being inferior to the soul, is considered negatively, evil, and a jail for the soul, St. Gregory has a constant tendency to culpabilize the body (the term most often used is actually "flesh") and its senses for the many mistakes one makes, which in turn lead to the numerous problems one suffers in life. Of a delicate physical constitution, constantly ill, which marked his life profoundly, he argues often with his own "flesh" that he blames and reprimands, as, for instance, when he complains about the unhappy soul dressed in flesh, the "dense flesh" of the present human condition.[11]

In the poem *Against the flesh,* as in other poems, too, Gregory discusses the paradoxical union between body and soul and indicates clearly that human dignity is linked to the soul, even if the human "I" is both body and soul, at the same time. That is why, as if chastising the body, he asks decidedly: "Body, respect me, control your desires and stop exerting your fury on my soul."[12] The hard fight with the bodily drives, not easy at all, is evident from the epithets he uses in a different address: "Flesh, I am telling you, you are so difficult to heal, sweet enemy..., ferocious animal..., fire that cools - incredible thing. Yet, it would be even more incredible if you would end up becoming my friend."[13]

However, in all his troubles and sufferings, physical and psychic, Gregory always turns to Christ and places his hope in Him.

Solitude

The great theologian of the 4th century liked to live a solitary life. He had an undeniable passion for philosophy, which for him meant withdrawal in solitude in order to contemplate the beauty of all things divine. In a letter to his friend Theodore of Tyana, Gregory, while explaining his withdrawal from the world in order to philosophize in peace, the most profitable thing of all, as he puts it, complains that his health had not improved, and asks Theodore to pray for him.[14]

St. Gregory was made for a hermit lifestyle; he lived ascetically. Solitude was in his heart and mind. One could think that this was not a proper environment for his shaky condition, yet, it is

what he considered the most appropriate place in order to complain to God of all his pains. And the greater the suffering, even among protests, the greater his attachment to God. He was living the experience of the desert even while living in the world. It seemed as if the illness would make his longing for solitude stronger. Even when he was younger, in his prime, these two, illness and the longing for solitude, asceticism, were obvious in his physiognomy and in his life. One can see that even in the complaint about his appointment as bishop of Sasima, a hamlet he calls a "pit hole", when he writes this deplorable self portrait: "a man who has nothing, wrinkled, crooked, poorly dressed, melted by fasting and tears, with an undignifying face."[15]

Even when he was patriarch of Constantinople during the Second Ecumenical Council, which he led in part, the state of his health was not good and the desire to withdraw into seclusion incessant. In 381, after the problems he had to go through during the debates of this council, he resigned in order to retreat to Nazianzus, on the family's estate, yet in isolation, in order to dedicate himself to prayer, meditation, and poetry, where he found consolation. In his farewell speech departing from Constantinople, he invoked as the reason for his resignation the condition of his health. He describes himself, while deploring his physical state, degraded by time, illness, and work, as being an old man, shy, dying every day, tired physically and mentally, so much so that he could barely speak.[16] He left the imperial capital telling those he left behind that he owed nothing to anybody putting it in this way: "the only debt I have to pay is death, and this belongs to God."[17]

Health problems

As time passed, several diseases found their place in Gregory's body. Around the year of 368, a terrible infection appeared in his mouth, reaching to the end of the throat and preventing his normal breathing. At times he could not breathe at all, making him think that he lived his last days. Then he was hit by asthma that tormented him for the rest of his life.[18] After 380, his health deteriorated further. Now he was having problems with his legs. The care offered by several doctors was of little help.[19]

John McGuckin mentions an acute rheumatism that around the years 382, 383 debilitated him even more. That determined Gregory to go to the Xanxaris baths, near Tyana (in Cappadocia), for treatment,[20] which did not help much, however.

Stelianos Papadopoulos describes how a horrible arthritis tormented him awfully. Gregory could barely move his legs, could not bend them any more, thus forcing him to write daily while standing. Yet what hurt him the most was that he could not kneel anymore for prayers.[21]

Around the year 387, Papadopoulos specifies in his book *The Wounded Eagle,* asthma and arthritis were simply torturing Gregory, and the stiffness of the body caused him unbearable pains.[22] In the following years those pains increased further, he became weak, felt more and more cold, was just skin and bone. The doctors who came to see him were completely powerless. His body wasted away, and the asthma cut off his breathing.[23] In 390 Gregory became bedridden. He could not bear the pains anymore and could not control his groanings and sighs.

This is how St. Gregory the Theologian died in the second half of the month of January 390.[24]

The Lamentations

Nowhere can one find more details about St. Gregory of Nazianzus's sufferings and especially about the way in which he was bearing them than in his poetry. His poems are full of lamentations, complaints, one can even say whining in the proper sense of expressions of self pity, accompanied by moanings and sighs.

Thus, poetry is the place where one sees the theologian ~~as~~ crying, victimizing and underestimating himself, protesting, showing regret and unhappiness through a large variety of expressions, one more impressive than the other. Here are some of them: "my pains," "my sufferings," "my illnesses," "my failures," "my miseries," "my tortures," "my burdens," "my wounds," "a groaning heart," "my dead limbs," "sad life," "I am tormented over here," "fragile old age," and others. Some lamentations also indicate a state of harsh self judgment with accents of repentance, as for example, when he bitterly culpabilizes himself: "I am bad" "cry, cry, sinner," "the serpent caught me again," "I am terrified."[25]

Repenting for "my bitter mistakes," he addresses himself: "Oh, unhappy me! Oh, soul that suffers sad punishments!" In many other places Gregory talks to himself, moaning in desolation and bitterness: "All that is left in me is a hopeless pain. This is what makes me groan." However, a glimmer of hope is visible from the way he speaks about purification of all his "filths" through rivers of tears, weeping to match his mistakes *(On his troubles)*.[26]

Then, with analogies to the Gospels, he describes himself: "I am a new Lazarus among the dead," "I am a new paralytic lying in bed," "This is my pain and the illness that overtakes my limbs," and again: "an ugly illness devours and destroys me, weakening my limbs every year" *(Against the deceiver in time of sickness)*.[27] In the poem *To himself in form of question and answer,* the suffering Saint asks and responds: "Where is the strength of my well made limbs? Exhausted by sickness." And then, as if taken by despair: "Where should I throw my body?" In the poem *Lamentation* he even asks Lord Jesus, somehow as if reproaching, yet as if waiting for a confirmation related to this tormented destiny, and as if this confirmation would have brought a certain consolation: "Alas, alas, my sufferings! What did I do wrong? Am I the only one who treated improperly your pure sacrifices?" And then he continues complaining about temptations, just as a child does when he runs to his parent, seeking protection: "Alas, my Christ, the serpent came to me again..." and then, crying out, using a metaphor: "Sword, extinguish the cursed fire at least a little" *(Lament to Christ)*.[28]

Speaking about his tormented old age, Gregory confesses his powerlessness and also his disagreement with what is happening to him, even though with some kind of resignation: "Old age has poured on me its embarrassing ordeal; I bend to the ground, multiplying the sadness in my heart" *(On his troubles)*.[29] In another poem he describes his weakness but also the permanent fight with the flesh: "Old age advances, my limbs are weak, yet the rebellious flesh continues to make its madness felt" *(Elegy)*. And in the poem *Lamentation,* announcing again the suffering, he writes: "I am wounded by many evils and bodily pains," which causes him to actually weep: "Alas, alas, my tears are flowing," he addresses Christ the Saviour, telling Him that he gave up a sin and consequently Jesus should take away his pain: "My pride is gone; you make the pain of my flesh go as well."[30]

Impressive and very touching is also the moment when the Saint from Nazianzus describes the depth of his passion in his old age: "Already my hair is white and my articulations contract...," "I have started already to get closer to the evening of a painful existence...," "I have never had such a profound pain" *(On his troubles).*[31] He seems shaken, becomes skeptical, interrogative, with a penchant to nihilistic evaluations: "Nothing is sure. I am, indeed, a murky stream of a river, always passing, having nothing stable," "I am nothing. Why am I hit by so many evils?" *(On human nature).*[32] In other words, if he were "somebody," he could understand the reason for the blow or even for the devil's temptations. Yet, being a "nothing," the question would be: why?

After having such thoughts, he exclaims, as if being at the end of his power, yet also on a slightly nihilistic note, as if nothing is important, nothing counts anymore: "I have enough of all that the present can offer: wealth, poverty, joys and unjoyful things, honor, humility, enemies and friends."[33]

In the poem *Prayer to Christ,* speaking bluntly of the "life of suffering" and of "my poor body," as he always does after lamentations, even after those that seem to be formulated in the negative, Gregory turns to Christ, his unmoved anchor: "Look to my poor body," he tells Him, "Your own making, created with Your own hands. Now the time has come that I leave it; how pitiful it is, how badly it smells, how terribly fragile it has become." Then the request comes: "Help me or take me out of this life before the end will bring me ever greater pains." As if he had suffered enough, Gregory comes with his interesting logic meant to persuade Christ to bring his life to an end: "Lord, why is there a need for more pains in order to purify my soul?" The question is courageous, because it implies the idea that the pain he endures is sufficient and he feels he is already pure.

St. Gregory continues to lament, yet on a different tone, now expressing his faithfulness and adhesion to Christ: "I die, I die in these big tribulations; however, I am dying for You, my God, the one who disperses the darkness of sickness for this dead man, who just for a little more time, lives in this painful life."[34]

The reproaches

In order to better understand St. Gregory's troubled spiritual state that at times could bring him to the brink of despair; one needs,

besides the few mentioned instances where the dialogue with Christ seems to be disrespectful, to get into more detail into his addresses to Lord Jesus, in particular those that indicate in more expressive ways, due to the dire suffering, his indignation, reproach, warning, order, even ultimatum.

Thus, in many places in his poetry, the great theologian seems to allow himself to be overwhelmed by dark thoughts, feeling abandoned by God, even though in the same moments he continues to have strong faith in Christ as his Savior. This situation is similar to the one when Christ, on the cross, on the one hand, cried to the Father: "Why did you abandon me?", yet on the other hand, at the same time, He manifested His uninterrupted connection with the Father when He said: "In Your hands I entrust My soul."

Gregory writes: "I fought bitterly, and I chased Satan away. Yet You, Lord, did not come to fill me, and inside me did not blow the grace of your Spirit... why are you scolding me, why did you abandon me...? Do with me the way You want." [35] The idea of abandon appears also in guise of a conclusion: "I weep because Christ has abandoned me, He who used to take care of me" *(Against the deceiver in time of sickness),* yet continuing to keep Christ accountable in other ways: "If I am God's breath, why, Christ, allow that I be bound to the earth?" *(Elegiac)*; "why do the believers have problems and the sinners don't? *(Lamentations about his pains and a prayer to Christ to take him from this life).*

About the end of life, this is what the Theologian from Nazianzus writes in the poem *Desire for death:* "If I am nothing, my Christ, why did You make me so? If You cherish me, why am I assaulted by so many evils?"[36] One has to notice here St. Gregory's courage to reproach to Christ the Savior his problems and existential dilemmas.

In the poem *Imploration* there is another reproach to the Lord, in the context of the "sickness's fury," specifying that his knees don't obey him anymore, that his limbs lost their power, that illness and time have finished him: "Lord Christ, why did You bind me in this trap of the flesh, in this cold life, in this muddy and miserable hole, if I am, as one would say, Your inheritance, indeed divine?" Then follows a strange combination of prayer and warning: "Have mercy, put an end to this misery, or decide that I have fought enough and have me taken away from here, put an end to my sufferings."[37]

In another poem *(Lamentation)* one reads the same type of ultimatum, even though phrased slightly differently: "You either stop

the evil and have mercy on Your servant, or allow this unfortunate soul to endure everything." This imperative attitude is manifested also in the context of some questions through which the Saint wants to hold Christ accountable: "Did You turn off Your grace towards Your servant?", as if telling Christ: while others still receive it? And also: "Why has Your servant been ruined?", a question sweetened by its introduction: "Give me strength, my Christ" *(The prayer of a sick man to Christ),* and completed by a declaration of faithfulness: "If I ever betrayed You during the tempest, then You can throw me again" (away from your face),[38] implying that he never betrayed Jesus. Yet, in his mind the question seems to persist: why is all this happening to him?

Continuing in the same tone, Gregory manifests indignation for his illness, for the problems of his life, and, with the same courage that could seem out of place, he questions Jesus: "Why am I so much hit by the waves of life?" And then, as a possible, indirect accusation: "Had I not been Yours, my Christ, this life would be a crime."[39]

Notwithstanding all these reprimands, however, St. Gregory realizes what could be considered his "insolence," guts or impiety of holding Christ responsible for what he has to do in life or how he must be treated. Here is a surprising and welcome declaration: "This is something extraordinary for me to make laws for divinity. O Christ, do with me, Your servant, the way You want" *(Against the deceiver in time of sickness).*[40]

All the above references to reproaches and questions offer us the most adequate chance to imagine the terrible, unbearable pains, maybe even the coming to the limits of despair in some moments of excruciating and indescribable suffering in the life of the Saint.

Yet, it is important to point to the fact that even in such moments he was clinging to Christ "as a child to the mother´s lap," as nicely put by a Romanian poet.

Christ, the last refuge

Towards the end of his existence, having enough of pains, of life itself, St. Gregory of Nazianzus asks Christ to bring an end to his sufferings.[41] "Through Your death [O, Logos], liberate me from this life. Give me rest in my trouble" *(Lamentations about his pains and a prayer to Christ to take him from this life).*[42]

The Saint's insistence indicates the unbearable state in which he was: "Come," he prays Christ, "help Your servant, and don't send

a gloomy end to my life;" then, with a certain type of courage combined with prayer, he writes: "If You hid Yourself from me, give me strength for help in the battle" *(Against the deceiver in time of sickness)*. And again: "What kind of relief will I have in my troubles? O, Christ, my king, save me!" *(Lamentation concerning the sorrows of his soul).* At times, Gregory speaks as if Jesus were a common person, who can forget things or who could be taken by surprise: "Lord, don't forget me, lest the enemy wrest me when You will not notice" *(Request to Christ).* In the attempt to convince Christ, in the poem *Lamentation,* St. Gregory invokes the gift of priesthood in the hope that this could be a leverage in front of God in order to obtain preferential grace or treatment: "Give me strength," he prays, "even if I am a sinner (yet still a priest!)"[43]

The Saint´s fight with the devil is heartbreaking. He is at the end of his energy. His prayer to Lord Jesus is of profound fondness: "See me, my Christ! Satan finished me. For how long should I still endure? He held me with the petrification of my body, he poked me with the asthma ... I am like a dry tree with frail roots in the blows of the wind. Come, therefore, again, my Christ, and give me Your light so I can go through the torments that have come over me."[44]

In many cases, the increased prayers to Christ, but also their tone indicate urgency. The Saint cannot wait anymore, has no more patience. In fact, he acknowledges that when he writes: "I am not an athlete of patience."[45] Yet from all his addresses one can see his sure, unquestionable, profound feeling that the Lord Jesus represents his last refuge, the anchor of his unshakeable hope, just as we read in this poem: "O Christ, God, You are my homeland, my strength, my richness, my fullness" *(To himself in form of question and answer).*[46]

The consolation

In his old age, towards the end of his life, in those years of pain, suffering, and isolation, St. Gregory finds consolation in two main directions: his past and God. As far as the past is concerned, he finds comfort in thinking not of the old griefs but of his life marked by joy and accomplishments, of the talents, gifts, successes, glory, and admiration that he experienced. One can see in this context an awareness on his part of the meaning of his life, a conscientization of the human dignity which is not incompatible in any way with the humiliations that came from other people or that were caused by the

illness that he had to go through. Thus, he remembers fondly his former parishioners who admired and loved him so much: "Those who sometimes enjoyed our sermons," he writes *(Against the deceiver in time of sickness)* with a justified "humble pride" that confirms his preaching vocation. Also, remembering the administrative ecclesiastical position that he had and which placed him at the top of his society on personal and professional levels, brought him similar comfort, even if he writes about them as if having some kind of regret: "I am not sitting in the company of the victorious ones any more" *(Against the deceiver in time of sickness)*.[47]

But in his suffering, Gregory finds consolation in the idea that everything is part of God's order: "I wonder about my old age and of my crippled limbs and about the sacrifices I suffer in my pains sent from heaven" *(Against the deceiver in time of sickness)*.[48]

It is with this kind of understanding that in his longest poem, *De vita sua,* he speaks of "blessed wounds," and when he writes an epitaph for his friend Philagrios, ill and in pain on his deathbed, St. Gregory calls the illness "healing suffering."[49]

The thought of Jesus Christ´s suffering on the cross, yet of the glory of the resurrection that followed, brings as well a different kind of consolation. Assuming Christ's crucifixion in his own suffering, Gregory declares with no hesitation: "I bear a cross in my limbs, a cross on my way, a cross in my heart. This cross is my glory" *(Repelling the devil and invocation to Christ*). One can see here a type of resignation in the face of death, a serene acceptance of the end due to a sentiment of dignified satisfaction at the thought that in the fight with the devil he prevailed definitively. This is how he talks to the devil: "Never did I bend the knee of my heart to you, but invincible and unconquered I will descend into the mother earth." And this is how he will meet Christ the Lord: "I will present to Christ the divine image that I received" *(Against the deceiver in time of sickness)*.[50]

Thus, just as one can see also in a very long poem, *On his troubles,* in particular towards the end, where the theologian enumerates, as in an inventory, all his worries, turmoil, and complaints, the thought goes toward God in whom he places all hope and whom he invokes under several theological names, as in a kind of doxological address meant to attract the divine mercy. And even if, in general, he describes negatively the human nature concerning the physical aspect, in final analysis he finds reasons to be convinced that everything has a sense and that God did not abandon the creation of

His hands. In the poem *On human nature* the theologian becomes philosopher, writing as in a supreme consolation, for himself, yet for others too: "Stop. Everything is secondary to God. Listen to your reason. God did not make me in vain."[51] Thus he feels relieved, spiritually set free, and can confess: "My poor soul aspires to see, finally, the day of its liberation," as he begins his journey to what he calls "the divine homeland."[52]

Conclusions

St. Gregory of Nazianzus was a fascinating personality. In a way, as walking on the traces of Lord Jesus Christ, he was at once weak and strong, sarcastic, where necessary and uncompromising with his enemies, yet of a kind and loving nature. He experienced conflicts, dilemmas, went through extreme situations, yet always with a stoic patience.

Indeed, his poetry unveils the real human being. It is an instrument of great significance for a necessary and objective knowledge we want and must have about the Saint, who was a redoubtable theologian, a bright philosopher, an unsurpassed orator, a Christian poet of most authentic vocation, considered by some biographers the poet *par excellence* of Eastern Christianity,[53] and an ascetic of high moral class, who dedicated his entire life to God totally and irrevocably.

NOTES:

[1] Michele Pellegrino, *La Poesia de S. Gregorio Nazianzeno,* Societa editrice „Vita e pensiero", Milano, 1932, p. 107.
[2] John McGuckin, „Preface" in *Saint Gregory Nazianzen: Selected Poems,* SLG Press, Convent of the Incarnation, Faircross, Oxford, Third impression, 1995, p. VIII.
[3] Alphonse Benoit, *Saint Gregoire de Nazianze,* Typographie Marius Olive, Marseille, 1876, p. 715.
[4] John McGuckin, *op. cit.,* p. V.
[5] Theodor Damian, *Gregory of Nazianzus. Discovering a New Face of His Personality*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, 2022, p. 3.
[6] Brian Matz, *Gregory of Nazianzus,* Baker Academic, Gd. Rapids, MI, 2016, p. 4.
[7] Theodor Damian, *op. cit.,* p. 63.
[8] John McGuckin, *op. cit.,* p. VI.
[9] Theodor Damian, *op. cit.,* p. 27.

[10] Saint Grégoire de Nazianze, *Oeuvres Poétiques. Poèmes Personnels,* II, 1, 1-11, text traduit et annoté par Jean Bernardi, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 2004, p. 9.
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[12] *Saint Grégoire de Nazianze, Poèmes et Lettres,* Textes choisis et presentés par Edmond Devolder dans la traduction de Paul Gallay, Les Editions du Solei Levant, Namur, Belgique, 1960, p. 57.
[13] *Ibidem,* pp. 77-79.
[14] Brian E. Daley, S.J., *Gregory of Nazianzus,* Routledge, London and New York, 2006, p. 203, note 180.
[15] Jean Bernardi, *op. cit.,* p. 86.
[16] Brian E. Daley, *op. cit.,* p. 150.
[17] Jean Bernardi, *op. cit.,* p. 132.
[18] Stelianos Papadopoulos, *Vulturul rănit. Viaţa Sfântului Grigorie Teologul [The Wounded Eagle. The Life of St. Gregory the Theologian],* Translation from Greek by Constantin Coman and Cornel Coman, Bizantină, Bucharest, 2006, p. 73.
[19] *Ibidem,* p. 275.
[20] John McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography,* St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 2001, pp. 387-388.
[21] Stelianos Papadopoulos, *op. cit.,* p. 291.
[22] *Ibidem,* p. 297.
[23] *Ibid.,* p. 306.
[24] *Ibid.,* pp. 314 şi 322.
[25] Theodor Damian, *op. cit.,* p. 106.
[26] Jean Bernardi, *op. cit.,* pp. 32, 18, 21, 22, 25, 38.
[27] St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Poems on Scripture,* Transl. and Introduction by Brian Dunkle, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Yonkers, New York, 2021, pp. 143, 145, 141.
[28] *Ibidem,* pp. 137, 129, 157.
[29] Jean Bernardi, *op. cit.,* p. 26.
[30] Brian Dunkle, *op. cit.,* p. 131.
[31] Jean Bernardi, *op. cit.,* p. 22.
[32] *On God and Man. The Theological Poetry of St. Gregory of Nazianzus,* Translated and introduced by Peter Gilbert, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 2001, p. 133.
[33] Brian Dunkle, *op. cit.,* p. 133.
[34] John McGuckin, „Preface", pp. 17-18.
[35] Stelianos Papadopoulos, *op. cit.,* p. 301.
[36] Brian Dunkle, *op. cit.,* pp. 141, 131, 135, 133.
[37] Brian E. Daley, *op. cit.,* p. 171.
[38] Brian Dunkle, *op. cit.,* pp. 131, 125.
[39] Brian E. Daley, *op. cit.,* p. 170.
[40] Brian Dunkle, *op. cit.,* p. 147.
[41] John McGuckin, „Preface", p. VI.
[42] Brian Dunkle, *op. cit.,* p. 135.
[43] *Ibidem,* pp. 147, 151, 157, 131.
[44] Stelianos Papadopoulos, *op. cit.,* p. 300.
[45] *Ibidem,* p. 202.

[46] Brian Dunkle, *op. cit.,* p. 139.
[47] *Ibidem,* pp. 141, 143.
[48] *Ibid.,* p. 147.
[49] John McGuckin, „Preface”, p. 18.
[50] Brian Dunkle, *op. cit.,* pp. 155, 143.
[51] Peter Gilbert, *op. cit.,* p. 136.
[52] Jean Bernardi, *op. cit.,* pp. 24-25.
[53] *Catholic Encyclopedia,* vol. VII, „Gregory of Nazianzus”, by K. Knight, updated Oct. 6, 2005, p. 8.

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HEINZ-UWE HAUS

European Community of Experience and National Cultural Identity – Facts

Abstract: In the process of globalization, two dynamics collide. One aims at leveling out cultural differences, the other emphasizes the need for diversity in cultural, social and economic developments in different regions of the world. Dealing with these dynamics is one of the great challenges of our century. In order to do justice to this, it is important to examine the similarities and differences between cultures more intensively to undergo historical-anthropological research and reflection; building on this, education must be seen more than ever as an intercultural pan-European task.

Keywords: Europe, the Soviet era, Estonia, Greece, American way, culture, values, identity

According to the traditional view, culture is art, literature, music, philosophy; it is predominantly differentiated from the civilizational and technical aspects. In this sense, most states in the European Union identify and legitimize themselves as "cultural nations". The concept of education has also been historically shaped in such a national narrative. As is well known, in the 19th century in Central and Western Europe, the middle class and culture formed a central alliance that continues to influence cultural policy in the individual EU member states to this day. Using Germany as an example, Wolfgang Mommsen states: "Culture - namely civil culture, in contrast to the traditional courtly culture - should not only form the unifying bond that gives the multitude of German tribes a common political identity across the borders of the existing dynastic state order, but at the same time also provide the ideal basis for the founding of a German nation state."[1] The bourgeoisie appeared alongside the churches and courts as a decisive bearer and promoter

Heinz-Uwe Haus, PhD, is Professor of Theatre at the Department of Theatre, University of Delaware, Newark, USA.

of culture, and its aesthetic norms developed lasting binding power. In this context, the concept of the people also "took on the role of a political idea" at an early stage.[2]

However, this close connection in the sense of a "cultural nation" set the institutionalized framework not only for the free cultural flowering of the early 20th century, for example, but also the parameters of a totalitarian German culture that positioned art as social power.[3] From national unification in the 19th century to the First World War despite the National Socialist collapse of civilization and communist rule, the appeal to culture and its specific promotion always played an important imaginative and practical role for the Germans.

"The longing for unity, which can be satisfied with cultural certainty, still shines through in the unification agreement of 1990. It says that during the years of German division, art and culture formed a basis for the continued unity of the German nation, despite the different developments of the two states. Germany's importance in the world also arises from its importance as a cultural state. The term "cultural state" comes into explicit constitutional use for the first time through the Unification Treaty and is also reflected in the comprehensive cultural policy evaluation of the study commission 'Culture in Germany' in a prominent declarative place."[4]

In addition to the idea of an organic unity of state and culture, the interpretation "culture-state" ultimately conveys the idea of an interpretive power. It is a consensual public mandate for the state and local authorities to actively carry out the core tasks of sponsoring and promoting culture. "However, promoting culture first and foremost means describing an attitude towards the concept of culture, towards political culture and ultimately towards the objects that are specifically to be promoted. Cultures are always historically determined, have their own world of ideas and this is how their identity is conveyed."[5]

In its history so far, Europe has been shaped by Christianity since, according to the New Testament account, the Apostle Paul had the much-quoted dream in Troas, on the western tip of Asia Minor, in which a Macedonian, a Greek, appeared to him and called out: "Come, come over to us and help us!". Paul, it is said, set sail for Greece the next day. The journey actually and symbolically represents the step of Christianity, which emerged in West Asia, into Europe, where it from then on became the largest and most important

living space for Christianity. In the current identity debate under the conditions of globalization, including the increasing immigration of non-Christian populations from foreign cultures, existential questions arise for national cultures. Will the number and influence of Christians in Europe drastically decrease (currently 75% of the total population)? How can the sources of Christian faith be rediscovered? How can the Christian-based national value system "intervene" more in public life, including in the dialogue within the EU?

For a deeper understanding of culture - also in order to be able to pursue practical pan-European cultural policy - it is essential to remember the determining internal connections.

Today, identity is defined as a general form of self-definition to coordinate an individual with his social environment. This means that the political-social environment and its definitional reality are also personalized, since these must always be seen in relation to the character of culture-determining identity formation. The play therefore involves natural or artificial realities of the sensually perceptible world.

Communication within one's "own" group becomes a decisive carrier of identity, which in turn facilitates and (co-)determines future interpretations of social conditions. The cultural framework of a community creates identity in differentiation from the "other" and at the same time the internal cognitive competence to communicate with each other and with non-members.

> The same evaluation standards with a certain repertoire of emotions function as mediators of this external and internal communication (…). Collective identity is thus constructed on the basis of assumed primordial and present political factors, so that daily life is depicted with reference to yesterday, today and tomorrow (…)".[6]

Such a process can be clearly described by Brecht's "alienation" model: "What is not strange, you find strange! / What is ordinary, you find inexplicable! / What is usual, that should astonish you."[7] In other words: the unrecognization of the known is the root of its inviolability. Alienation is intended to remedy this inalterability. The special nature of the traditional ideas is immediately highlighted, i.e. Here the possibility of their changeability becomes visible.

Even though culture is constantly re-creating itself out of society, the diversity of its forms of expression in space and time is

still dialectically structured by the overall context, since the future is shaped from the past through the present.

The discussion about shared reality with the help of historical facts gives the group its specific character and a relatively stable sense of belonging. The mutual influence of social and historical experiences and the derivation of national phenomena from ethnic and territorial ties and institutional organization can only take place if a high level of historical "evidence" of this specific group formation and identity can be drawn on to address the underlying problem of emotional loyalty and the social commitment of the state.[8]

In relation to Europe, the question here is to what extent it may be possible to find or constitute a pan-European body of tradition that combines transnational and collective identities, based on an overarching minimal catalog of values and expressed in effective "pan-European" symbolism, via a European discourse can establish.[9] The memory of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation creates an essential coherence factor with its strong connection to Roman-Christian culture.

> The advance of the Ottomans to the west and the emergence of a powerful empire that had absorbed the entire former Byzantine Empire by 1453 and that, after the victory at Mohács in Hungary in 1526 and the siege of Vienna in 1529, practically ceded the 16th century to the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation borders, raised the problem of political unity in Europe anew and also created the basis for a thinking about identity.[10]

This frontal position led to a conscious demarcation from the Ottoman Empire, using its affiliation with the Islamic world as a clear demarcation criterion. Not least for this reason, the Christian character of Europe was strongly emphasized, so that the idea of a Christian republic *(res publica christiana)* became a dominant idea in the European identity and alterity discourse from the 16th century onwards. This contrast was already developed in the 15th century by the humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini in his speeches to the Turks, in which the idea of the House of Europe also appears ("in Europe, *id est in patria, in domo propria",* http://www.europa.clio-online.de).

However, the Enlightenment and the anti-clerical tendencies of the French Revolution created a new system of values based on the *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen* (1789) and the fundamental rights texts inspired by it, which promoted freedom,

equality and solidarity of people. Above all, the new understanding of freedom was transferred to the peoples and thus became the starting point for national independence movements and thus led to strongly centrifugal movements from a pan-European perspective.[11] On the other hand, the gradual implementation of parliamentary democracy with the principles of co-determination and separation of powers and a legal system that applies equally to all in the new nation states provides the basis on which a new common European social order will later be built.

The nation state can therefore complement European integration in a meaningful way by first taking the citizens' needs for identity seriously and establishing everyday practical references, "but always referring to the European community of experience (...) to the integration of Europe's identities with the help of change to advance ideas about Europe from a national context."[12]

At the Congress of the European Union Germany took a decisive step towards establishing a European identity in 1995 with a Charter of European Identity. The drafting of such a document was suggested by the former Czech President Václav Havel in a speech to the European Parliament in 1994. The foreword states:

> It therefore seems to me that the most important requirement that the European Union faces today is a new and unmistakably clear self-reflection of what one could call European identity; it consists in a new and real one clear articulation of European responsibility, in increased interest in the very meaning of European integration and all its wider connections in the world today, and in the recovery of its ethos or - if you like - its charisma.[13]

Havel argued for a clearer emphasis on Europe's common spirit and civilizational values. The Charter sees itself as a response to the innovations within the Union structure that were implemented in the course of the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty and that consolidated the community, especially in administrative, political and economic terms, but hardly contributed to a stronger sense of togetherness and solidarity among the peoples involved. Establishing this or raising awareness is the aim of the charter: "The European civilization process, as set in motion by our ancestors and us, has led us to a stage of development at which we are all dependent on one another. We can help shape or endure this common fate."[14] The Union is not only a community of fate, but also a community of values that

shapes tolerance, humanity and brotherhood. The heritage of the ancient world and Christianity are seen as a common basis, which in the historical epochs of the Renaissance, humanism and the Enlightenment developed into the values of democracy, the rule of law and the validity of fundamental and human rights that are widespread in Europe today.

> The creations of culture and art that emerged in fruitful interaction, the discoveries of the laws of nature and their application for the benefit of people, the critical thinking in recognition and judgment have resulted in people being able to live and work peacefully together in free self-determination without need. Europe has spread these values throughout the world.[15]

The aim of the charter is to encourage all member nations to participate in European integration. Measures to achieve this goal include increasing the participation of all its citizens and the transparency of politics. A "succinct and understandable constitution."[16] with a fixed order and a catalog of fundamental rights should be presented to all EU citizens for voting. A planned cultural and educational policy is also called for as essential: "One is not European by birth, but becomes one through education."[17]

In view of the increasingly threatening world situation, the EU would do well to protect its sovereignty and freedom, the European way of life, against any threat from outside, not only diplomatically and economically, but also through a consistent awareness and assertion of its own pan-European identity, which is based on the diversity of the national cultures of the Union to assert themselves offensively. Europe is in a competition between systems, with authoritarian Russia and with the communist superpower China, which is blatantly demonstrating its claim to world power along the new "Silk Road" in parts of Europe. Just as all political forces in the EU - both in the member states and at Brussels level - must be mobilized against the intrusion of non-European powers into strategically important infrastructures in security policy, technological and cultural policy sectors in order to prevent this more effectively than before. The cultural identity of the European multi-ethnic family, which has grown over centuries, is the engine that leads the European project to a new dynamic. The European Union is peaceful and will remain so - but Europe also has its own interests

and must express them with one voice in a common manner and bring them into a fair balance with "the others".

NOTES:

[1] Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Civic Culture and Political Order. Artists, writers and intellectuals in German history 1830–1933,* Fischer, Frankfurt/M. 2002, p. 59.
[2] See Helmuth Plessner, *Limits of the Community,* Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M., 2002, p. 41.
[3] Cf. Peter Reichel, *The beautiful appearance of the Third Reich. Fascination and violence of fascism,* Fischer, Frankfurt/M. 1993, p. 79 ff.
[4] See German Bundestag (ed.), *Culture in Germany. Final report of the Enquete Commission of the German Bundestag,* ConBrio, Regensburg 2008, p. 51 (preamble): "The Federal Republic of Germany sees itself as a cultural nation and cultural state. This is reflected in the cultural responsibility of the municipalities, the constitutions of the states and the practice of the federal government in its area of competence."
[5] Tobias J. Knoblich, „Cultural promotion between expectations and reality," in *APUZ*, 20-22/2016 (http://www.bpb.de/apuz/227041/, https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/227641/kulturfoerderung-zwischen-anspruch-und-wirklichkeit/), p. 1.
[6] *Ibidem,* p. 2; cf. Herbert Marcuse, "On the affirmative character of culture," in *ibid., Culture and Society,* Vol. 1, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M. 1965.
[7] Bertolt Brecht, "The exception and the rule," in *Plays,* vol. 3, Aufbau, Berlin, p. 260.
[8] See Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era,* Blackwell, Cambridge, 1995.
[9] In today's media, Europe and the European Union are perceived, among other things, as a patchwork, a protective community, an alliance of interests:
"I don't see Europe as a conventional superpower, but rather as a creative patchwork of traditions and ideas. The more heterogeneous a society is, the more imaginative it is. Europe must coordinate to avert damage, but must not lose its cultural diversity in the process" (Harold James, "Risky Bank Helper Syndrome. Interview" in *Kurier,* September 10, 2013, p. 9).
"Vulnerable nations understand that preserving the multinational institution to which they belong is in their own best interest; the return of nation states would be a danger for them" (Timothy Snyder, "Integration, Counter-integration, Disintegration. What held the Habsburg Empire together, why it fell apart and what the EU can learn from it," in *NZZ,* December 21, 2013, pp. 25-26, regarding the interest of the smaller states of Eastern Europe in the EU).
"To found a new state order that is no longer based on the principle of balance of power, but on the integration of interests" (Joschka Fischer / Fritz Stern, *Against the Current. A conversation about history and politics,* Beck, Munich, 2013, p. 71, regarding the EU process). The diversity of such perceptions reflects the complexity of the European network of states.
[10] Wolfgang Schmale, *History and Future of European Identity,* Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 2008, p. 21.

[11] See Michael Metzeltin, "European Integration - European Identity?," in *Impulse: texts and discussion contributions from the meeting of the philosophical-historical class of the Austrian Academy of Sciences on March 20, 2014,* (https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/NEWS/2015/PDF/FuG-8_Europaeische-Integration-Web.pdf).
[12] Tobias J. Knoblich, in *Impulse: texts and discussion…* (see note 11), p. 2; see Bertram Meier, Bishop of Augsburg, "Europe, where are your roots?," in *Paneuropa Germany,* December 2020, p. 15.
[13] See speech by the President of the Czech Republic on March 8, 1994 in the European Parliament in Strasbourg; https://www.europa-union.de/fileadmin/files_eud/PDF-Files_EUD/CHARTA_DER_EUROPÄISCHEN_IDENTITÄT.pdf;
[14] *Ibid., Charter of European Identity,* 1995.
[15] *Ibidem.*
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] *Ibid.*

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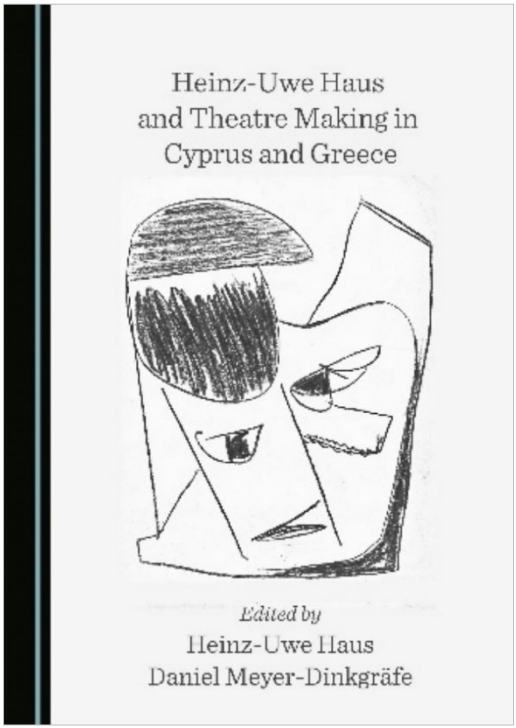

This book presents to the reader a selection of the considerable amount of material written and published in relation to Heinz-Uwe Haus's productions of Brecht's plays and Brechtian productions by other dramatists, especially ancient Greek drama, in Cyprus and Greece since his production of The Caucasian Chalk Circle marked the launch of the Cyprus National Theatre in 1975 after the country's political turmoil that had culminated in the Turkish invasion. This includes material written by Haus at the time for his cast, announcements of the productions in the media, newspaper reviews and academic articles about the productions, conference contributions, and reflections by cast members (both professional actors and university faculty) and designers (set, costume, light, music). His work in Cyprus and Greece led to further collaborations on productions of ancient Greek plays across the world.

OVIDIU ȚUȚUIANU

Traces of the Pelasgians / Dacians at Troy

Abstract. The paper presents evidence that attests to the statement of the ancient historian Herodotus that "Troy was a Pelasgian city." The entire territory of Thrace to the south and north of the lower Danube was inhabitated by Pelasgian/Dacian tribes whose representatives also participated in the famous Trojan War. Such evidence is due to the Romanian researchers Nicolae Densușianu, Vasile Pârvan and Zsófia (Sofia) Torma. Heinrich Schliemann himself, the discoverer of Troy, validated Zsófia Torma's discoveries regarding the "family connection" between the ancient inhabitants of Transylvania and the population of Troy.

Keywords: Pelasgians, Thracians, Dacians, Troy, Trojan War, Odyssey, Iliad, Memnon's colossi, Thracian heroes, archeological evidence, toponymic similarities.

According to Herodotus, the richest
and the strongest city of the Aeolians was Troy,
a pelasgian fortress surrounded by cyclopean walls...
Nicolae Densușianu
(Dacia preistorică [Prehistoric Dacia], 1913)

Introduction

> Even before the immigration of Greeks, Celts and Germans into the lands of Europe, most of this continent was occupied by a race of people... which Greek historians generally called Pelasgians... The Pelasgians appear at the forefront of all historical traditions not only in Hellas and Italy, but also in the northern regions of the Danube and the Black Sea, in Asia Minor, in Assyria and Egypt ...The entire territory of Thrace, which in ancient times included the homoglot populations of the northern lower Danube, was also a Pelasgian country.[1]

Ovidiu Țuțuianu, PhD, is a Researcher at the Daco - Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania.

In his documented work cited above, Nicolae Densuşianu brings evidence of the presence of the Pelasgians in the Heme (Balkans) Peninsula, the Aegean Islands, Minor Asia, Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia, Egypt and Libya, Italy, South Gaul and in Iberia, in the northern parts of the Danube and the Black Sea.

He also draws attention to the fact that, since time immemorial, the Pelasgian tribes of shepherds swarmed from the Carpathians to the west and north, but also to the south, where they reached the northeastern regions of Africa, the plains bathed by the river Nile, areas now in Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia.

These groups of shepherds, "wealthy and warriors," carried there the first elements of prehistoric civilization; they founded the first villages and towns, built the first temples and oracles, drained the swamps of the Nile, fertilized much of the deserts.

Thus, the socio-political and religious foundations of the society of that time were laid here.

These first inhabitants of Egypt were called *Roma* and belonged to their religious beliefs, to the traditions and dialect of the spoken language, to the old and strong family of the *Arim* north of the lower Danube. Several Egyptian kings from the *Roma* family (according to ancient inscriptions and sources) bear names such as Rama-tu, Ramen, Ramen-ter, Ramen-ma, Ramsses, Armesses. Also in the lists of kings of Ethiopia there are names like: Rhamâi, Remâ, Armâh and Letem.

According to the Egyptian priests, the ancient kings of Egypt were from the tribe of Pyrrhus, a word that Herodotus translated into Greek as "honest and generous man." At first, the word Πίρωμις / piromis / (pi-Roma) was only an ethnic name, where "pi" is a proclitic article in Egyptian grammar. From the *piromis*, or rather from the *piramis*, derives the name of the *pyramids*, the ancient funerary monuments of the Egyptian kings, which the Arabs call, more correctly, Haram, meaning Aryan tombs.

As a reinforcement of the Pelasgian pastoral origin, the pharaohs of Egypt wore, since the time of Osiris, as traditional insignia of their sovereignty, the shepherd's hook (a bent rod) and the whip of the boar. These accessories, which I have seen on countless statues located in the halls of the Museum of Egyptology in Cairo (October 1, 2017) are often mentioned in Romanian folklore and are still worn by owners of sheep herds and cattle herds in the

Fig.1 Location of Troy

Carpathians. However, as N. Densuşianu observes, "Unfortunately, even the few fragmentary data which have remained about the Pelasgians, are not transmitted by those who conquered them, persecuted them, scattered and slandered them ... The history of their real civilization has remained buried. In particular, the political history of the southern Pelasgians ends with the fall of Troy."[2]

Troy, legendary city

Troy (Ancient Greek Τροία / Troia or Ἴλιον / Ilion; Ilium in Latin) is a legendary city-fortress, the site of the Trojan War, as described especially in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the two epic poems of large proportions attributed to Homer.[3] Today, it is the name of an archeological site in northwestern Turkey (Anatolia, Çanakkale Province), the traditional location of Homeric Troy (in Turkish Truva) on Hissarlik Hill southeast of the Dardanelles Strait, under Mount Ida near the east coast of the Aegean Sea (fig. 1).

A new city, Ilium, was founded on this place during the reign of the Roman emperor Augustus. It flourished until the founding of Constantinople and gradually declined during the Byzantine period.

Fig.2 Reconstitution of the city-fortress Troy

In the 1870s, guided by Homer's descriptions, the amateur German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann excavated the area, discovering several treasures believed to belong to King Priam.

Other research has revealed the existence of several human settlements, built successively on top of each other (about 9). One of these (Troy VII) is usually identified with Homeric Troy (fig. 2).

Other locations were considered, but the site was successfully identified as the location of the city called Wilusa in Hittite texts, Ilion being the Greek transliteration of that name. Accepted by most researchers, it was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1998.[4]

The Trojan War

This major conflict of antiquity is presented in verses much appreciated by generations, in the form of a seductive story with both deities and humans as heroes. Zeus / Jupiter, the supreme ruler of the gods of Olympus, finding out that several "subordinates" wanted to rebel, punished them. The most severely punished were Apollo and Poseidon, who would work hard to raise the walls of Troy.

Laomedon's son Priam took his father's place on the throne of Troy and married Hecuba, who gave him 50 sons and a large number of daughters. But when she was pregnant with one of her sons, Hecuba had a dream that she was not giving birth to a baby but a burning torch that was going to burn the whole city.

On account of this dream, when the child was born, Priam gave him to a shepherd ordering him to abandon the child in the woods, hoping that the beasts of the forest would kill him. When the shepherd came back after a few days, however, he found the child sucking milk from a female bear, took him home and cared for him, calling him Alexander. When he grew up, the child became a shepherd to his father, Priam. King Priam organized parties, games and competitions, offering as a prize a bull that Alexander cared about. As a result, he decided to compete and won. Priam and Hecuba asked him where he was from and found out that he was their son. They also called him Paris (which meant a close relative, found again).

At the wedding of the goddess Tethys with King Peleus, all the gods were having a good time. Only the goddess Eris, who protected discord, quarrel, gossip, had not been invited to the party, and so she thought of how to spoil their mood. In the middle of the party, she opened the doors of the divine palace and threw a golden apple among the dancers with the challenge "to the most beautiful of you", then disappeared instantly. The quarrel between the goddesses about who would take possession of the apple was stopped by Zeus. The main rivals were his daughters, Aphrodite (goddess of love and beauty) and Palas-Athena (goddess of wisdom), but also his wife, the beautiful but jealous Hera. In order not to upset either of them, and since none of the gods wanted to be the judge, Zeus decided that the choice should be made by a mortal, the shepherd Alexander-Paris. Each of the goddesses promised Paris a reward if chose her. Hera told him that she would make him king of all Asia, Palas-Athena that she would make him victorious in battle and give him wisdom, and Aphrodite that she would make him happy by having him marry Queen Helen, daughter of Zeus and Leda.

Paris accepted Aphrodite's offer and urged her to go to Sparta and kidnap Helen, the beautiful wife of King Menelaus. Paris set out for Sparta together with Aeneas, and King Menelaus let Helen be their host. But when Menelaus left, Aphrodite brought in Eros, who shot

an arrow of love directly into Helen's heart which led to Helen boarding Paris' ship and leaving with him for Troy.

Menelaus, advised by Hera (who set out to take revenge for the choice of Paris), consulted with his brother, Agamemnon, and decided to go to war against Troy. An effort at diplomacy through Priam failed when Paris refused to return Helen.

Thus, in preparation for their war, Menelaus and Agamemnon assembled an army with the best warriors from all around Greece. The prophet Calchas told Agamemnon that they would be victorious if he was accompanied by Achilles, the son of the goddess Tethys and the mortal Peleus. So, Agamemnon sent Odysseus to look for Achilles and call him to battle.

Tethys knew that the end of Achilles would come in the Trojan War. In order to "harden" him from an early age so that no weapon could penetrate him she bathed him in the river Styx, holding him by his left heel, which became the only area of his body left vulnerable. The centaur Hiron taught him how to fight.

Under the leadership of Agamemnon, 1186 ships and more than 100,000 armed men reached the shores of Troy. Hector, Priam's eldest and strongest son, came to meet them. The battle began, but eventually the Trojan troops retreated into the city. Bloody battles between Greeks (correctly, Achaeans) and Trojans continued to go on for several years.

At some point, Agamemnon's camp was engulfed in the plague. Hundreds of soldiers died every day. To escape the plague, Chryseis, the daughter of the Trojan priest Chryses, who had fallen into the hands of Agamemnon, had to be returned to her father. Achilles asked Agamemnon accordingly, but he insisted on receiving Achilles' favorite slave, Briseis, in compensation, causing a great conflict between the two. When the battle against Troy resumed, needing the brave Achilles, Agamemnon returned Briseis, but Achilles refused to take her.

When Hector, Priam's son, arrived at Agamemnon's camp, he was met by Patroclus (in the armor of Achilles), whom he killed. Upon hearing this Achilles became very angry, and his mother, the goddess Tethys, asked Hephaestus for a new, even stronger armor. Then Achilles reconciled with Agamemnon and they resumed the fight against the Trojans together.

Fig.3
Trojan horse

Among the brave Trojan rulers, only Hector remained, who confronted Achilles outside the city walls, but was defeated by him, who dragged his inert body tied to his chariot in front of the Trojans, who were terrified by such cruelty. Old Priam, protected by Hermes, went to Achilles' tent, begging him to give him Hector's body. Achilles accepted and gave the Trojans a 12-day respite for the funeral services, after which the war resumed. Hector's death was the greatest loss for the Trojans, and he was mourned by his parents, Helen, his sister-in-law, but especially by his beloved wife, Andromache.

Also, the army of the Amazons, led by Pentecost, who came to the aid of Troy, was defeated by Achilles, as was Memnon, the son of an Egyptian pharaoh.

At one point, however, Paris put an arrow in his bow aiming it at Achilles, and the god Apollo directed the arrow at his vulnerable left heel.

There was a fierce struggle for Achilles' weapons and body between the Achaeans and the Trojans who had once again dared to go come out of their city walls. Finally, the weapons came into the possession of Odysseus, the winner in the dispute with the mighty Ajax, who, losing, committed suicide.

The Greek Philoctetes possessed the bow of Heracles with arrows soaked in the blood of Hydra, and with this bow he killed many Trojans, among them Priam's son Paris.

The *Iliad* ends in despair for both the Achaeans and the Trojans, as the brightest heroes on both sides had long since perished, and yet the war over Troy still continued. Ten years had passed since the beginning of the conflict, without the gods either driving out the Achaeans or tearing down Troy.[5]

Only in the first chapter of the *Odyssey* will we find the story of the end of the city-fortress. Odysseus proposed to the Greeks to build a wooden horse large enough to accommodate 50 well-armed soldiers (fig. 3), and Agamemnon and the bulk of the troops and the bulk of the troops retreated to the nearby island of Tenedos.

The Trojans, believing that the Greeks had left them, gladly rushed to the shore, where they found the wooden horse. They took it back with them into the city of Troy celebrating the event indulging in drink. In the middle of the night, Odysseus and the other Greek fighters came out of the wooden horse and opened the city gates for the bulk of the Greek army that had returned.

The Trojans, mostly caught asleep, were slaughtered, and Troy was burned to the ground. Those who escaped alive were chained and taken captive.[6]

Memnon's colossi

According to some sources, based on the statement of Eratosthenes, the Trojan War took place between 1194-1184 BC.[7] We have mentioned among the many disputes between various heroes, the close confrontation between the Achaean/Greek Achilles and the Egyptian Memnon. This Memnon was the mythical son of the goddess Aurora and the king of Egypt and Ethiopia, Tithon. He had been sent by his father to help Troy, being also a nephew of Priam. After killing Antiloh (the brave and skilled son of old Nestor), Memnon fought until the evening against the famous Achilles. Eventually he fell dead at the feet of Achilles, who thus was taking revenge for the death of his good friend, Antiloh.

The goddess Aurora, full of grief, went to Zeus with the request not to abandon her son. The elder of the gods listened to her prayer and turned the brave Memnon into the dew of dawn, which falls on the leaves in the morning before the ascension of Aurora. Thus, the goddess sees her beloved son every morning, before he melts from her warmth.[8]

Fig.4 Memnon's colossi

Interesting and still unexplained is the fact that during almost two centuries, the myth has found a concrete application in the Egypt of the pharaohs. On the west bank of the Nile, near the ancient city of Thebes ("the oldest and grandest capital of Egypt, which was called Pelasgian"[9]) near the present-day Luxor and Karnak, there are still the remains of the monumental alley leading up to the temple (now missing) of Amenhotep III / Amenophis III.

The reign of this pharaoh (1390-1352 BC) marked the height of the power and prestige of ancient Egypt. From that temple, one of the grandest buildings of the New Kingdom period, two gigantic twin statues (18 m high and weighing 800 tons), carved from monolithic sandstone blocks, have been preserved, depicting the pharaoh seated on the throne, with his hands on his knees (fig. 4). The statues are improperly known as "Memnon's Colossi," and the locals call them "el Colossat" or "es Salamat."

Later, in 2014, another two statues were discovered, smaller in size, representing the same pharaoh; one of them, with a height of 13 m and weighing 250 tons, shows him sitting with his hands on his knees, the other standing.

It is said that in 27 BC, a strong earthquake shook the area, causing a massive crack in the statue to the north, other cracks being caused over time by strong sandstorms. Consequently, every morning at sunrise, the statue began to make bizarre, mournful sounds.

This strange phenomenon, also mentioned by ancient historians (Strabo, Tacitus, Philostratus, etc.), was interpreted by Greek poets and by other visitors to the area as a materialization of the myth of Memnon: Receptive to Aurora's pleas, Zeus / Jupiter reincarnated Memnon in the statue of Amenhotep III / Amenophis III. Thus, Memnon is being brought back to life every morning, when Aurora comforts her son with her rays, and he responds with a long cry.[10]

The tender legend has a scientific explanation: the sounds emitted are due to the vibrations produced on the surface of the cracks, caused by the sudden transition from the cold of the night to the heat of the first rays of the sun.

It is also said that around 170 AD. the Roman emperor Septimius Severus ordered the statue to be repaired which let the noise cease.

However, some guides are still recommending today that tourists visit the huge statues during sunrise. "If you are lucky, the dew that dries in the cracks will give you unreal sounds, famous since the time of ancient Greece".[11]

On the occasion of a trip to Egypt in October 2017, I was unable to verify whether the phenomenon reported from time immemorial is still being repeated today. But, under the impression of what was told by the guide on the spot, I tried, a few days after the visit, to transcribe the myth in verse:

The singing stone

(The Myth of the Memnon Statue)

From Tithon and Aurora, he, Memnon, was born,
Monarch in Egypt, from times long gone
He was sent by his father to the aid of Troy,
But he paid the tribute for his too short glory.
He defeated Nestor's son in battle,
But was slain by Achilles later.
Then Aurora came to Jupiter,

To bring her son back to life every day.
And so, Aurora, every morning,
Caresses him with rays passing over his face.
And the cracked face of the colossal rock,
Responds with a cry, to maternal love!

Heroes of Thracian origin involved in the Trojan War

In the *Iliad,* Memnon is described as "a proud and handsome son of Pharaoh, with a face as white as milk, huge in nature, brave and unsurpassed in wars".[12] The very light skin of the pharaoh, totally incompatible with the sun-darkened Egyptians of today, leads us to believe in his non-African origin, which coincides with the statement of N. Densuşianu that "the first pharaohs of Egypt were from the Arim tribe from the north of the lower Danube."[13] So it can be deduced that Memnon was of Thracian / Dacian origin.

Another warrior mentioned in the *Iliad* is Rigmos, from the place where the "plow pulls out large, thick earth (Thracia)", which had rushed to the aid of the Trojans.[14]

On the other hand, one cannot overlook the seemingly curious proximity of the names Memnon and Agamemnon, fighters from different camps, but who originally came from the numerous Thracian tribe, descending from the Pelasgians.

Tel, the king of the Missions (estates) from the Haemus mountains (south of the Danube), who came to the aid of Troy, according to Aristophanes, wore the pilos hat (turquoise, specific to the Getae / Dacians and preserved to this day in Romanian folk dress). He fought valiantly in the Trojan War, was wounded by Achilles, but retreated to heal his wounds. His son Euripil also took part in the fighting, killing many Greeks, among them Mahaon, the famous surgeon of the Hellenic army.

In the camp of the allies of Troy was also the Amazon Pentesilea, a Thracian by nation, who died on the battlefield under the blows of Achilles. Taking off her armor, he was amazed at her beauty and began to weep bitterly.[15]

In my own work printed in 2017[16] I showed with regret that the famous historian Vasile Pârvan (1882-1927) who was very much inspired by *Dacia preistorică [Prehistoric Dacia]* of N. Densușianu when he wrote his *Getica. O protoistorie a Daciei* [*Getica. A Protohistory of Dacia],*[17] did not mention it in the bibliography, stating that "N. Densușianu's work is a fantastic novel, full of absurd mythology and philology, which aroused admiration and enthusiasm only among amateurs." However, after 1920 (9 years after the death of N. Densuşianu and in the context of the increase of the national consciousness of the Romanians as a result of the Great Union of December 1, 1918), the scientist Vasile Pârvan, through the associates he assembled, moved decisively to the forefront of the archeological research regarding the prehistory of Dacia.

At the same time, he founded the annual magazine *Dacia. Recherches et découvertes archéologiques en Roumanie* (1924) and gave lectures at Cambridge University under the title *Dacia. Ancient civilizations in the Carpatho-Danubian regions.*

Based on archaeological evidence unknown to his predecessors, but also on obvious toponymic similarities between the northern Danube area and Asia Minor, he finally stated that

> on the ruins of the Mycenaean fortress (Troy – author's note) in which the poet had sung Hector, the hero, and the sad Andromache, the fierce Dacians had again built, a few centuries after the great fall, another fortress; the founders from the northern Carpathians were now pouring bronze weapons, and Getic potters were shaping earthenware vessels, the patterns of which had once been created in the cradles of our mountains and on the fertile banks of the Danube and Tisza.[18]

Among the objects analyzed by V. Pârvan was the "Hungarian" type pottery (with horn-shaped prominences and obliquely cut edge of the vessels) found both at Troy VII and in Boian Lake, west of Călărași (fig. 5). And among the metal objects are the "Carpathian" type sickle and especially the "Transylvanian" type, cast according to the perfectly preserved clay pattern discovered in Troy VII (fig. 6).[19]

Fig.5 Carpatho-Danubian vessel found at Troy

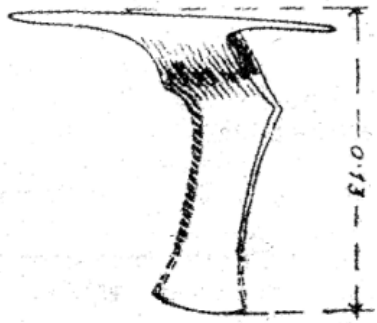

Fig.6 "Carpathian" type of sickle found at Troy

Regarding the toponyms, he draws attention to the similarity between geographical names from the ancient historical regions of Bithynia and Mysia (neighboring Troy) and those of Dacia: Cepora / Bithynia, aka Capora / Dacia; Caucones / Bithynia, aka Caucoenses / Dacia; Argesis / Mysia, aka Argesis / Dacia; Sala / Bithynia, aka Sala / Dacia etc.

The way in which the Romanian academician confronted, in a documented way, the opinions of some famous German historians (K. Schuchardt, H. Schmidt, A. Brűckner, A. Götze and W. Dörpfeld), concluding that "Not the Cimmerians, but simply the Getae were the inhabitants of Troy between 1,000 and 700 BC,"[20] is admirable.

Conclusions

This essay cannot be concluded without mentioning the special contribution of the first female archaeologist from Transylvania, the Romanian Zsófia (Sofia) Torma (born on September 27, 1832 in Cristur, Hunedoara county, and deceased on November 14, 1899 in Orăştie) to the hypothesis of the connection between Dacians and Troy.

Thus, following the excavations started in 1875 in the Turdaş area (near Alba Iulia) and continued until 1879 in the Nandru Valley and in other adjacent areas, Torma (considered in the documents of the time a Hungarian researcher, although she came from an old Romanian family) discovered objects, ceramics, figurines or spindles,

on which over 300 inscriptions in regular, geometric or stylized forms were found.

The results of her efforts were presented at the general meeting of the General Society of Anthropology, held in Berlin in August 1880. On this basis, in subsequent discussions of the renowned researcher with illustrious archaeologists of the time (A. Voss, R. Virchov and H. Schliemann) the common conclusion was that "European Neolithic populations certainly had their own writing system".[21]

The existence of this proto-writing reported by Zsófia Torma was to be confirmed in 1908, when the Servian archeologist Miloje Vasic found examples of it at the site of Vinča (near Belgrade), and again in 1958, in Banjica (also near Belgrade). In 1961, the researcher Nicolae Vlassa from Cluj discovered the "tablets from Tartaria" with similar writing, and, more recently, the famous archaeologist from the USA (of Lithuanian origin) Marija Gimbutas validated through her research the idea of the emergence of European proto-writing in the "Vinča-Turdaş" culture.[22]

It is interesting that from the unique collection of prehistoric objects discovered by Torma at Turdaş and in the Nandru Valley, the most precious are considered idols and also clay wheels containing rudiments of writing.

During a visit (following the proceedings of a Balkan Conference on Environmental Protection) to the Vinča site in November 2002, I was particularly impressed by the exemplary way in which it was preserved, organized and valued.

Coming back to Sofia Torma's communications in 1880, Schliemann himself stated that he agreed with her conclusion that "The ancient inhabitants of Transylvania belonged to the same prehistoric trunk of a family of Aryan peoples as that of Hissarlik, Troy."[23] Thus, for the first time, the researcher drew attention to the "perfect identity between the culture of Troy and that of Dacia".[24]

NOTES:

[1] Nicolae Densușianu, *Dacia preistorică [Prehistoric Dacia]* (facsimile edition of the edition princeps, Institutul de Arte grafice Carol Göbl, Bucharest, 1913), Arhetip, Bucharest, 2002, p. CII.
[2] *Ibidem*, p. CIII.
[3] George Andreescu, *Iliada, Odiseea, Eneida repovestite [Iliad, Odyssey, Aeneid, retold],* Viitorul românesc, Bucharest, 1994, pp. 25-35.
[4] Ahmed Talat, *Turcia. Ghid touristic [Turkey. Travel Guide]*, Vremea, Bucharest, 2006, p. 27.
[5] G. Andreescu, *op. cit.,* p. 49.
[6] *Ibidem*, p. 16.
[7] Jeremy B. Rutter, Jo Ann Gonzalez Major, *Troy VII and the Historicity of the Trojan War*, Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, USA, 2016, p. 8 [https://sites.dartmouth.edu/aegean-prehistory/lessons/lesson-27-narrative/], (accessed 25.06.2025).
[8] Anca Balaci, *Mic dicționar de mitologie greacă și romană [Small dictionary of Greek and Roman mythology],* Mondero, Bucharest,1992, p. 217.
[9] N. Densușianu, *op. cit.,* p. 1108.
[10] Roxana Nicolae, *Egipt. Ghid turistic [Egypt. Travel Guide],* Editura "Vremea", Bucharest, 2006, p. 26.
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[12] .G. Andreescu, *op. cit.,* p. 10.
[13] .N. Densușianu, *op. cit.,* pp. 932-934.
[14] .G. Andreescu, *op. cit.,* p. 23.
[15] Alexandru Papadopol-Calimah, *Scrieri vechi pierdute despre Dacia [Lost old writings about Dacia],* Dacica, Bucharest, 2007, p. 7.
[16] Ovidiu Țuțuianu, *Să-l reconsiderăm pe Nicolae Densușianu [Let's reconsider Nicolae Densușianu],* Dacoromână TDC, Bucharest, 2017, p. 22.
[17] Vasile Pârvan, *Getica. O protoistorie a Daciei [Getica. A protohistory of Dacia],* Editura "Cultura românească", Bucharest, 1926, p. 47.
[18] Vasile Pârvan, *Dacii la Troia. Studii de protoistorie a Daciei [Dacians at Troy. Protohistory studies of Dacia],* Editura "Saeculum I.O.", Bucharest, 2011, p. 237.
[19] *Ibidem,* p. 238.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 239.
[21] *Ibid.,* p. 240.
[22] *** "Proto-scrieri din Turdaș și Valea Nandrului, descoperite în 1875. Românca Zsófia Torma, una din primele femei arheolog din lume [Proto-writings from Turdaș and the Nandru Valley, discovered in 1875. The Romanian Zsófia Torma, one of the the first female archaeologist in the world]", in *Certitudinea,* Bucharest, Year 3, No. 31, 2019, p. 8.
[23] *Ibidem.*
[24] *Ibid.*

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IULIU-MARIUS MORARIU

Aspects of Spiritual Autobiography in Gala Galaction's Diary

Abstract. Known both for his literary and for his theological work, Gala Galaction (1879-1961) was one of the important voices of the Romanian culture from the 20th century. While his novels have consecrated him among the relevant writers in the area of realism, the translation of the *Bible* in the Romanian language that he made in 1938 together with Vasile Radu, and his books of theology come to speak about a man with important contributions in the theological scholarship. Among the relevant works signed by him that can be counted at the borders between literature and spirituality there must be mentioned also his diary. Containing in its first part letters to nun Zoe that he falls in love with and whom he later marries, but also notes about his inner life, there are also passages that can be subsumed to the spiritual autobiography. We have tried here to present the aforementioned work through the eyes of this genre in order to see how introspection, care for spirituality, or liturgical service have influenced his life and his way of thinking.

Keywords: letters, sister Zoe, liturgical services, gratitude, love.

Introduction

Spiritual autobiography is not only a relevant genre for the theological space,[1] but also for the literary,[2] philosophical,[3] sociological, political doctrines,[4] or for the historical one. While for the first one it can be relevant both for the pastoral life,[5] but also for the doctrinary one, or even for the practical sectors of it, for the historians, some of the information found there can be used as sources

Iuliu-Marius Morariu (protosyncell Maxim) PhD, Academy of Romanian Scientists, New York Branch, „Babeș-Bolyai" University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Angelicum Pontifical University, Rome, Italy, Pretoria University, Pretoria, South Africa, „Saint George" Diocesan Cathedral in Saint-Hubert, Quebec, Canada.

for the understanding or reconstruction of an event, for literature due to their testimonial value, or also as sources of inspiration. Each domain can therefore use this category of writings in order to produce new works or valuable analyses.

It must also be mentioned that, compared with other texts from the theological field, spiritual autobiography has in itself an inter-disciplinary value and can create bridges between spiritualities and cultures. Despite of the fact that the main purpose of the works of the genre is not to focus on people, places, or events, fact that explains why often the marks of time and space are missing there, they still are important sources for dialogue and discussion. Moreover, some of the classical memoirs or journals contain also passages relevant for the genre.

In the Romanian space, when one speaks about such works one is tempted to think about writers like Fr. Nicolae Steinhardt,[6] the diaries of the former Archbishop of Maramureș, Justinian Chira,[7] or about some of the notes written by people who were imprisoned for political reasons.[8] Still, there are also other works that contain pages of spiritual autobiography. One of them will constitute the topic of the present research.

Gala Galaction and his autobiography

Under his original name Grigore Pișculescu, Gala Galaction (1879-1961) was not only a relevant voice for the Romanian literature, but also a priest and a professor of theology. While as a writer of literature he left a valuable heritage consisting in different novels and stories describing the life of the Romanians from the Danube borders with Bulgaria,[9] as a theologian he also published different books and articles[10] and a translation of the Bible realized together with Vasile Radu.[11] His works, especially the literary ones, have constituted, during the years, the motivation of research for many scholars.[12]

The diary

Among them, his *Diary* must surely be mentioned. Re-printed[13] and discussed by different scholars,[14] it presents the writer

beyond the work. As Teodor Vârgolici shows in the foreword of one of the editions,[15] he was influenced by Edmond et Jules de Goncourt and their work in the field.[16] For him, the diary was a form of dialogue and of release from different emotions. Thus, as the aforementioned researcher underlines:

> The diary is the writer's confidant, his friend, a remedy for solitude or his spiritual tribulations, a means of analysis and self-improvement, a tacit correction of his own life circumstances, all together representing a psychological diagram of a shorter or longer period of the author's existence, a kaleidoscopic image of his moral and spiritual biography, viewed in its evolution.[17]

Its first part contains, a few letters to the nun Zoe whom he will marry on 14th of April 1903, to Dr. Olga Secară-Tulbure, the first Romanian woman enrolled in a faculty of Medicine,[18] or to the daughter of Dr. Secară-Tulbure.[19] As the editor shows, at the time of its publication, his diary was the only one in the Romanian literature.[20] The editor insists on its value as a work of introspection. At the same time, he emphasizes the fact that it reflects the complex and contradictory way of being of its author:

> The writer's reflective spirit is constantly dominant throughout the *Diary*. It contains pages of profound meditation, disturbing confessions, deep introspection, alternating with pages of acute observation undertaken on the surrounding realities, of effusions of a lucid spirit, concerned and dedicated with passion, with sincerity, not to his own person, but to his fellow men… Gala Galaction's diary, like his entire work, reflects the completely unique, singular structure of his complex and contradictory personality.[21]

The work, seen therefore as „a mirror of his inner turmoil"[22] has also a documentary value and a literary one. Despite of the fact that, in the last years there have been other diaries published, the one of Gala Galaction, consisting in its first part of letters to Olga Secară and nun Zoe who will later become his wife, and later from notes, remains unique in the Romanian literature. As expected, it has not been projected to be a spiritual autobiography. Therefore, the elements of the genre can be only sporadically found there. Still, there are some passages relevant for it, that we will try to present in the following lines.

Aspects of spiritual autobiography in Gala Galaction's journal

Despite of the fact that it was not projected as a spiritual autobiography, Gala Galaction's journal contains valuable elements of the genre. Thus, in the first letters, after speaking about his childhood, the author insists on the fact that the practical realities of life scare him.[23] At the same time he discloses his spiritual concerns and his interest in religious life. Unfortunately, he proves himself to be rather disappointed by the intellectual preparation of the Orthodox clergy of the time in comparison with the Catholic one.

Small notes, like, for example: "Kindness seems to me to be the most suitable adornment of a woman,"[24] or his meditations on topics like love, or human life[25] bring him closer to later notes of authors of the genre like Dag Hammarskjöld.[26] In short notes he manages there to express deep meditations about relevant topics for the spiritual life. Therefore, in a note he defines himself based on his hobbies:

> I love music with passion, especially music performed on the violin, piano and organ. Music is for me an opportunity for inspiration, but sometimes a reason for pain.
> I love the colour white and all white flowers very much. I love only the shades of other colours, and the palest ones. I love perfumes endlessly - this is a weakness of mine.[27]

As a young man who falls in love with nun Zoe and tries to express his feelings in his letters, and also realize an introspection. Therefore, for example, he says in one of his letters:

> You have already noticed that I only make known to you what is positive in my soul (the non-bad part), but I have passed over everything that is negative. Will you think that I am bragging?... Oh, I am sure that you did not believe this for a moment. But what good would it do me to point out my defects to you? First, you will never know them, as no one else knows them (only my conscience knows them); second, the defects only upset me; my defects have never upset others; third, you know that I fight with all sincerity against them and that I will manage to put them in chains once and for all (this will have to be the case).[28]

Similar ideas can be found, under a different form and based on a different motivation, indeed, in works like the one of Tereza of

Avila or Saint Silouan from Athos.[29] Compared to Nicholas Berdyaev,[30] where there can be found information about the genesis of some of his works, the way how some of his ideas developed, Galaction provides such information only in the last part of his notes and with parsimony. The reason is simple. In the first part, he was not yet a known author, but rather a young writer with projects and ambitions. Still, this more than any other work, reveals the talent and the gifts of the future novelist.[31] Thus, feelings both with religious and psychological meanings are described in notes that bring into attention also his literary talent. There is such an example:

> It's a night of punishment. To the restlessness of the soul is added the physical suffering of the hours of forced wakefulness, to the moral tension is added the dull weight of the tired body... And the hours flow long - tortured by thoughts, broken by sleeplessness, confused by the visions of the night that we tear apart in the speed of the train...[32]

The divine service – a keynote of Gala Galaction's spiritual autobiography

Among the aspects related with the aforementioned genre, the liturgical service can be considered as a leitmotiv. Gala himself confesses his love for them to nun Zoe in several letters. Thus, for example, he mentions the following:

> I do not believe, Sister Zoe, that among the emotions of the soul there is one sweeter for me than the one that the combination of music with the height of religious words gives me, that is: the solemnity of the Divine Service. I feel so much tenderness within me, I feel so much warm expansion in my chest, I feel so much vastness in my mind, that every Sunday brings me, in its hour of service before the Altar, the delights of an unspoken poem.[33]

Of course, it must be mentioned that in his youth the future writer came in contact with Catholic spirituality that fascinates him. He likes their sermons and is often saddened by the fact that the Orthodox priests of the time were not as well prepared as the Catholics ones.[34] At the same time, the fact that he was in love with Zoe that he will later marry and she was living at the time in an important monastery of the Romanian space, brings him closer to God

and increases his interest in religion. Thus, in one of his letters the author shows that:

> Alas, I must be calm and wise, and above all, to seek, humbled and crushed, the path of the gentleness of the One Who made me know you, to ask with folded hands and a broken heart, the mercy and protection of the One Who impeccably dresses me in the golden network of His very profound and very holy intentions, to worthily raise the forehead of my thoughts to the One to whom the voice of the organ and the incense from the censers rise![35]

Therefore, for him, love means also a way to humility and gratitude to God for His grace. At the same time, coming close to divinity means also discovering the treasure of the liturgy and of the services of the Church. He not only takes part as a simple attender to them. He observes and makes notes. He is capable to describe all that happens inside a service like the one on Palm Sunday,[36] or Good Friday[37] at the Roman-Catholic Cathedral in Bucharest and also to emphasize its symbolic meaning. Later, when he will become a student at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Cernăuți, this will help him to make connections with his own spirituality and at the same time to evaluate in a comparative manner the way how the faith was put into practice there.

Conclusions

As we have tried to show in the present research, despite of the fact that it was not projected as a spiritual autobiography, Gala Galaction's diary contains valuable pages of the genre of spiritual autobiography. Aspects like the seeking for God, the sense of life, or the liturgical service come to bring him closer to other relevant authors from this area of research and to provide a text that can be useful not only for the readers of literature, but also for the ones who want to discover the writer and theologian from another perspective, relevant both for the theological as well as for the literary space.

NOTES:

[1] Cf. Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Repere ale autobiografiei spirituale din spațiul ortodox în secolele XIX și XX. Ioan de Kronstadt, Siluan Athonitul și Nicolae Berdiaev [Landmarks of the spiritual autobiography from the Orthodox space. John of Kronstadt, Silouane the Athonite and Nicolae Berdyaev],* Lumina, Iassy, RO, 2019, p. 14.

[2] See: Adam Smyth, (ed.), *A history of English autobiography,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 2016; Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010; James Olney (ed.), *Studies in Autobiography,* Oxford University Press, New York, 1988; M. Paul Raybaut, *Les récits de vie. Théorie et pratiques,* Éditions Presse Universitaire de France, Paris, 1983; Philippe Lejeune, *Pactul autobiographic [The autobiographic pact],* translated into Romanian by Irina Margareta Nistor, Univers, Bucharest, 2000; Liam Harte, (ed.), *A History of Irish Autobiography,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017; Mihaela Smiedt, *Particularități ale romanului autobiografic în "Falsificatorii de bani" de André Gide și "Romanul adolescentului miop" de Mircea Eliade [Particularities of the autobiographical novel in "The Money Counterfeiters" by André Gide and The Novel "Myopic Adolescent" by Mircea Eliade],* Eurotip, Baia Mare, 2011; M. Galle-Gruber, A. Rothe (eds.), A*utobiographie et Biographie. Actes du Colloque de Heidelberg,* Nizet, Paris, 1989; Alina Crihană, *Aspecte ale memorialisticii românești post-totalitare: între pactul autobiografic și pactul cu istoria [Aspects of post-totalitarian Romanian memoirism: between the autobiographical pact and the pact with history],* Europolis, Galați, 2011; Ciprian Vălcan, Ilinca Ilian (coord.), *Cultura memoriei în Europa Centrală [The culture of memory in Central Europe],* Universităţii de Vest, Timişoara, 2005; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "An interdisciplinary genre in the Theological Literature: the spiritual autobiography and its landmarks for the Orthodox space," in *Journal of Education, Culture and Society,* 1/ 2018, pp. 145-150.

[3] Cf. Marcus Aurelius, *Gânduri către sine însuși [Thoughts to himself],* translated into Romanian by Cristian Bejan, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2013.

[4] Cf. Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings,* Faber and Faber, London, 1972; Bernhard Erling, *A Reader's Guide to Dag Hammarskjöld's Waymarks,* Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, St. Peter, Minnesota, 2010. See also: Gustav Aulen, *Dag Hammarskjöld's White Book: An analysis of Markings,* Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1969; Henry P. Van Dusen, *Dag Hammarskjöld – the Statesman and His Faith,* Harper & Row, New York, 1967; Maxim (Iuliu-Marius) Morariu, *Autobiografia spirituală a lui Dag Hammarskjöld – o abordare teologică [Dag Hammarsjkold's Spiritual autobiography – a theological approach],* Argonaut, Cluj-Napoca, 2016.

[5] Mary Clark Moschella, "Spiritual Autobiography and Older Adults," in *Pastoral Psychology,* LX (2011), Issue 1, p. 97.

[6] N. Steinhardt, *Jurnalul fericirii [The diary of happiness],* ed. Virgil Ciomoș, Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1992.

[7] Like: Justinian Chira, *Reflecții III. Din caietele Arhiepiscopului Justinian [Reflections III. From the notebooks of Archbishop Justinian],* Episcopia Ortodoxă a Maramureşului şi Sătmarului, Baia Mare, 2016.

[8] See, for example: Moise Iorgovan, *Sfântul închisorilor – mărturii despre Valeriu Gafencu [The Saint of the Prisons – testimonies about Valeriu Gafencu],* Reîntregirea, Alba-Iulia, 2007. Cf. Danion Vasile (coord.), *Din temniţe spre sinaxare [From prisons towards the synaxaria],* Egumeniţa, Galaţi, 2008; Paul Goma, *Jurnal,* vol. 1 – *"Jurnal pe sărite" [Diary, 1st volume – "Selective diary"],* Nemira, Bucharest, 1997; Ion Caraion, *Jurnal – literatura şi contraliteratura [Diary – literature and counterliterature],* Cartea Românească, Bucharest, 1980; Constantin Argetoianu, *Însemnări zilnice [Daily notes],* vol. 1-4, ed. Stelian Neagoe, Machiavelli, Bucharest, 1998-2009; Constantin Argetoianu, *Pentru cei de mâine. Amintiri din vremea celor de ieri [For the ones of tomorrow. Memories from the ones of yesterday],* Humanitas, Bucharest, 1991; Aspazia Oţel Petrescu, *Cu Hristos în celulă [With Christ in the cell],* second edition, Areopag, Bucharest, 2012; Nicole-Valery Grossu, *Bénie sois-tu, prison,* Les Editions du Plon, Paris, 1978; Lena Constante, *Evadarea imposibilă – penitenciarul politic de femei, Miercurea Ciuc (1957-1961) [Impossible escape -women penitentiary, Miercurea Ciuc (1957-1961)],* second edition, Florile Dalbe, Bucharest, 1996; Lena Constante, *Evadarea tăcută – 3000 de zile singură în închisorile din România [Silenced escape – 3000 alone in the Romanian prisons],* Humanitas, Bucharest, 1992; Galina Răduleanu, *Repetiţie la moarte [Rehearsal for death],* Fundaţia Sfinţii Închisorilor, Piteşti, 2013; Nichifor Crainic, *Memorii,* vol. 2 – *"Pribeag în ţara mea – răspuns la actul meu de acuzare – mărturii din închisoare" [Memories – second volume – "Haunted in my country – answer to my accusation act"],* ed. Alexandru Condeescu, Muzeul Literaturii Române, Bucharest, 1996; Gheorghe Calciu-Dumitreasa, *Cuvinte vii – "a sluji lui Hristos înseamnă suferinţă!" [Living words – "serving Christ means suffering"],* Bonifaciu, Bacău, 2009; ***, *Viaţa Părintelui Gheorghe Calciu după mărturiile sale şi ale altora [The life of Fr. Gheorghe Calciu according to his testimonies and other ones],* Christiana, Bucharest, 2007; Ioan Ianolide, *Întoarcerea la Hristos – document pentru o lume nouă [The return to Christ – document for a new world],* second edition, Bonifaciu, Bucharest, 2012; Ioan Ianolide, *Deţinutul profet [The imprisoned prophet],* Bonifaciu, Bucharest, 2009; Aurel State, *Drumul crucii. Amintiri de pe front şi din Gulaguri [The road of the Cross – memories from the front and Gulags],* Rost and Fundaţia Sfinţii Închisorilor, Piteşti and Bucharest, 2013.

[9] See, for exemple: Gala Galaction, *Bisericuţa din Răzoare – nuvele şi schiţe [The Church from Răzoare – novels and stories],* Vieţi Româneşti, Iassy, 1914; Gala Galaction, *Caligraful Terţiu: adevăr şi închipuire [Terţiu the caligrah – truth and imagination],* Cultura Națională, Bucharest, 1921; Gala Galaction, *Chipuri şi popasuri – confesiuni literare [Images and stops – literary confessions],* ed. Teodor Vârgolici, Pentru Literatură, Bucharest, 1969; Gala Galaction, *Clopotele din Mănăstirea Neamţu [The bells of Neamţu monastery],* Alcalay, Bucharest, 1923; Gala Galaction, *Doctorul Taifun – roman [Doctor Taifun - novel],* Cultura Națională, Bucharest, 1934; Gala Galaction, *În grădinile Sf. Antonie [In St. Anthony's Gardens],* Vremea, Bucharest, 1942; Gala Galaction, *De la noi la Cladova [From us to Cladova],* Cartea Românească, Bucharest, 1925; Gala Galaction, *La Vulturi! [To the hawks!],* Tineretului, Bucharest, 1962; Gala Galaction, *Lângă apa Vodislavei – nuvele şi povestiri [By the water of Vodislava – short stories and tales],* Pentru

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[11] *Biblia adică Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a Vechiului şi a Noului Testament [The Bible, meaning the Divine Scripture of the Old and New Testaments],* translated by Gala Galaction and Vasile Radu, Institutul Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Bucharest, 1938. Later, it was also reprinted. See, for example: *Biblia adică Dumnezeiasca Scriptură a Vechiului şi a Noului Testament [The Bible, meaning the Divine Scripture of the Old and New Testaments],* translated by Gala Galaction and Vasile Radu, Cerchio, Rimini, 1990.

[12] See: Tiberiu Avramescu, *Amintiri literare despre vechea mişcare socialistă (1870-1900) [Literary memories of the old socialist movement (1870-1900)],* ed. Tiberiu Avramescu, Minerva, Bucharest, 1975; Camelia Caracaleanu, *Fantastic şi folcloric în nuvelistica lui Gala Galaction [Fantastic and folkloric in Gala Galaction's short stories],* Corint, Bucharest, 1996; Alexandru Cerna-Rădulescu, *Arbori din ţara promisă: Liviu Rebreanu, Petre Pandrea, Nicolae Iorga, D. Tomescu, N. Plopşor, Tudor Arghezi, Gala Galaction [Trees from the Promised Land: Liviu Rebreanu, Petre Pandrea, Nicolae Iorga, D. Tomescu, N. Plopşor, Tudor Arghezi, Gala Galaction],* Cartea Românească, Bucharest, 1973; Gheorghe Cunescu, *Gala Galaction [Gala Galaction],* Editura Arhiepiscopiei Tomisului şi Dunării de Jos, Galați, 1989; Gheorghe Cunescu, *Pe urmele lui Gala Galaction [Following in the footsteps of Gala Galaction],* Sport-Turism, Bucharest, RO,1982; Iulica-Georgeta Dănescu, *Fantasticul de tip folcloric în nuvelele lui Gala Galaction şi Vasile Voiculescu [The folkloric fantasy in the short stories of Gala Galaction and Vasile Voiculescu],* Larisa, Câmpulung Muscel, 2017; Zoe Dumitrescu Buşulenga, *Contemporanii mei. Portrete [My Contemporaries. Portraits],* Nicodim Caligraful, Putna, 2019, pp. 99-106; Elis Râpeanu, *Gala Galaction și Valea Călugărească [Gala Galaction and Valea Călăgărească],* Semne, Bucharest, 2019; Teodor Vârgolici,

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[13] See: Gala Galaction, *Jurnal [Diary], 3 volumes,* edited by Mara Galaction Țuculescu and Teodor Vârgolici, Minerva, Bucharest, 1973-1980.

[14] For example, in 2014, there was a PhD thesis dedicated to his diary. See: Andreica Mihaela, *Lumini și umbre – jurnalul lui Gala Galaction [Lights and Shadows. Gala Glalaction's diary],* no publishing house mentioned, Alexandria, RO, 2014. Cf. http://alil.academiaromana-is.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Memorialistica-lui-Gala-Galaction.pdf, accessed 03/18/2025.

[15] Teodor Vârgolici, "Prefață [Foreword]", in Gala Galaction, *Jurnal [Diary],* vol. 1, ed. Mara Galaction Țuculescu and Teodor Vârgolici, Minerva, Bucharest, 1973, pp. 7-35.

[16] See: Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, *Journal,* vol. 1-4, Fasquelle et Flammarion Editions, Paris, 1956.

[17] Teodor Vârgolici, "Prefață [Foreword]", p. 7.

[18] Olga Secară Tulbure started the faculty of medicine in Bucharest in 1880, but unfortunately an illness will not allow her to finish it in time and therefore, Maria Cutzarida will become first Romanian women ever who graduated from a faculty of medicine in Montpellier in 1882. Olga will finish it only in 1892, with a thesis entitled: *Clinical study on pseudo-hypertrophic paralysis;* See Teodor Vârgolici, "Prefață [Foreword]," p. 15. See also: Viorica Gomoiu, *Les femmes dans l'histoire de la médecine en Roumanie,* Bucharest, 1932; https://adevarul.ro/stiri-locale/calarasi/prima-feminista-a-romaniei-o-femeie-geniala-din-1599807.html#google_vignette, accessed 13. 03. 2025; https://web.archive.org/web/20180613161241/http://www.hetel.ro/index.php/2011/08/4009/, accessed 03/13/2025.

[19] In fact, it is with this letter, written on February 14, 1950, shortly before his illness, that the book starts. See: Mara Galaction, "Tată [Father]", în Gala Galaction, *Jurnal [Diary],* 1st volume, ed. Mara Galaction Țuculescu and Teodor Vârgolici, Minerva, Bucharest, 1973, pp. 39-41.

[20] "Through its structure, specificity and dimensions, Gala Galaction's *Diary* is, for now, unique in Romanian literature." Teodor Vârgolici, "Prefață [Foreword]," p. 19.

[21] *Ibidem,* pp. 21-22.

[22] *Ibid.,* "Prefață [Foreword]," pp. 23.

[23] Gala Galaction, *Jurnal [Diary],* 1st volume, ed. Mara Galaction Țuculescu and Teodor Vârgolici, Minerva, Bucharest, 1973 (later quoted as: Gala Galaction, *Jurnal [Diary]),* p. 46.

[24] *Ibidem,* p. 47.

[25] *Ibid.,* p. 48.

[26] For details about the author, his work and its meaning, see: Dag Hammarskjold, Markings; Bernhard Erling, *A Reader's Guide to Dag Hammarskjöld's Waymarks;* Gustav Aulen, *Dag Hammarskjöld's White Book: An analysis of Markings;* Henry P.

Van Dusen, *Dag Hammarskjöld – the Statesman and His Faith;* Maxim (Iuliu-Marius) Morariu, *Autobiografia spirituală a lui Dag Hammarskjöld – o abordare teologică [Dag Hammarsjkold's spiritual autobiography – a theological approach],* Argonaut, Cluj-Napoca, 2016.

[27] Gala Galaction, *Jurnal [Diary],* p. 48.

[28] *Ibidem,* p. 50.

[29] See: Cirol Garcia, "La experiencia de Dios en el Libro de la Vida de santa Teresa de Jesús," in *Scripta Theologica,* XLVII (2015), Issue, 2, p. 419. Siluan Athonitul, *Între iadul deznădejdii şi iadul smereniei [Between the hell of disapointment and the hell of humility],* Deisis, Sibiu, 2001, p. 47; Christian Tămaş, "Notă asupra ediţiei [Note on the edition]," in Tereza din Avila, *Drumul perfecţiunii [The road of perfection],* Ars Longa, Iassy, 1995, p. 5.

[30] See: Nicolae Berdiaev, *Cunoaşterea de sine. Exerciţiu de autobiografie filozofică [Self-knowledge. Exercise of filosophical autobiography],* Humanitas, Bucharest, 1998.

[31] Teodor Vârgolici, „Prefață [Foreword]," p. 36.

[32] Gala Galaction, *Jurnal [Diary],* p. 53.

[33] *Ibidem,* p. 85.

[34] *Ibid.,* p. 137.

[35] *Ibid.,* p. 138.

[36] *Ibid.,* p. 188.

[37] *Ibid.,* p. 190.

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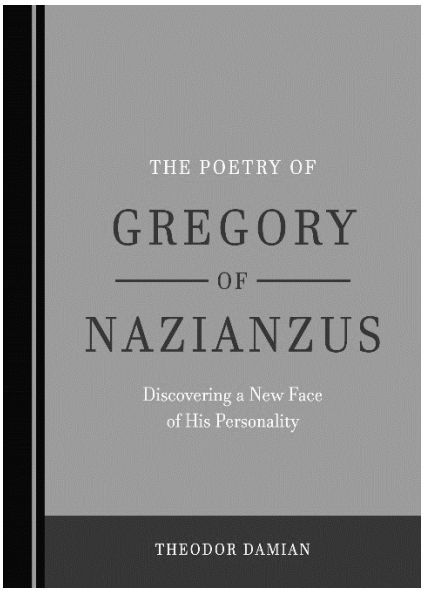

Gregory of Nazianzus was a personality of first rank in the complex world of the 4th Christian century. Famous for his theological orations and for his role in the development of the Second Ecumenical Council in 381 in Constantinople, where he was the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, he was one of the most celebrated poets of his time, even though today he is known in particular for his major contributions to the establishment of the Orthodox theology that was confronted with the heresies of the time.

This book will allow the reader to discover not the theologian, but the poet in Gregory, as his poetry is the place where one can see the all-too-human aspects of his personality. As such, it represents a significant contribution to scholarship on Gregory, bringing to light new and defining characteristics of his life, thought and practice.

“Theodor Damian does us a great service in this book by reminding us what a fine poet Gregory was. A well-known and successful poet himself, Prof. Damian is able to enter into the heart as well as the mindset of Gregory’s World” (John McGuckin)

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LINO BIANCO

In the Name of Humanity

Abstract: This article addresses primacy and synodality, two main concepts in Christian ecclesiology. It questions whether the Orthodox Church of Ukraine is a case of ethnophyletism and includes a discussion on fascism, communism and ecumenism. It concludes with a plea for reconciliation as the way forward for humanity.

Keywords: Ecumenism, primacy, synodality, fascism, communism, reconciliation.

Introduction

Historical and social realities have impacted upon the ecumenical councils and their subsequent directions. Ecumenical councils are needed to strengthen communion in the church. In the course of two millennia, the Catholic Church has recognised twenty-one ecumenical councils;[1] the Eastern Orthodox Church recognises the first seven as legitimate, namely, Nicaea I, Constantinople I, Ephesus, Chalcedon, Constantinople II, Constantinople III, and Nicaea II. The councils relevant to the discussion in this article are Vatican Council I and Vatican Council II, hereafter referred to as Vatican I and Vatican II, respectively.

Vatican I was a unique council for several reasons, including the fact that it focused on doctrine rather than a specific heresy and that it was the first to have representation of bishops from various parts of the world.[2] It ended abruptly due to the Franco-Prussian war, with only two of the six proposed decrees being addressed, namely, (i) faith and revelation, and (ii) the primacy and infallibility of the Pope stated by the dogmatic constitution of the Church of Christ, *Pastor Aeternus*.[3] Although the latter was only invoked once since

Lino Bianco, PhD, is Full Professor and resident academic at the University of Malta and the non-resident Ambassador of Malta to Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is the Ambassador Emeritus of Malta to Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova.

1870 – the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption by Pope Pius XII in 1950 – it had repercussions as to the role of the Pope from a legal perspective, which led to an overhaul of the Church in terms of governance and structure. Vatican I opened the doors of the Papacy for dialogue with the contemporary world. It is still considered a framework for today's Church, notably with respect to the Petrine ministry: "Vatican I was in itself also a kind of ultramontanist 'modernization' of the Roman Catholic Church, which paved the way for the *aggiornamento* of Vatican II and still shapes the post-Vatican II church especially for what concerns the Petrine ministry".[4]

Primacy and Synodality: A Canonical Tradition

In his address at the annual working session of the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group – a team of thirteen Eastern Orthodox and Catholic theologians from different countries invited on the basis of their theological expertise – held at the Institute of Ecumenical Studies of the Angelicum, Rome, Pope Francis stated that:

> Through the constructive patience of dialogue, especially with the Orthodox Churches, we have come to understand more fully that in the Church primacy and synodality are not two competing principles to be kept in balance, but two realities that establish and sustain one another in the service of communion. Just as the primacy presupposes the exercise of synodality, so synodality entails the exercise of primacy.[5]

In the opening chapter of *Ecumenism, primacy, authority and love – faces of a complex theological reality*, Iuliu-Marius Morariu refers to the work of this non-official ecumenical working group, which has met annually since 2004. Morariu's work is a short anthology of thought-provoking, ecumenical-related themes. He cites the work undertaken by the working group with respect to primacy and synodality in the doctrines of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches which promotes unity between the two Christian traditions. It may be read as a preamble to a few other themes discussed in the anthology ranging from the relation between secularism and political theology to the manner in which ecumenism was understood by the Romanian communist regime.

The permanent representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at the World Council of Churches, Archbishop Job (Getcha) of Telmessos, hereafter referred to as Archbishop Job, notes that

> the bilateral dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church has focused since 2006 on the issue of conciliarity and the issue of primacy and synodality. It is therefore in the context of synodality that the thorny question of the Roman primacy has since then been addressed.[6]

His Eminence notes the work undertaken by the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. The *Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church: Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority*, hereafter referred to as the Ravenna document, defines three levels of ecclesial communion – local, regional and universal.[7] These levels were endorsed in the document *Synodality and Primacy during the First Millennium: Towards a Common Understanding in Service to the Unity of the Church*, hereafter referred to as the Chieti document, which studies primacy and synodality in the first millennium.[8] During this period both churches were still in full communion: "the history of the Church in the first millennium is decisive. In spite of certain temporary disruptions, Eastern and Western Christians lived in communion during this period and, in this context, the essential structures of the Church were instituted".[9]

Three months prior to the publication of the Chieti document, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew stated, in his opening address at the inaugural session of the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church:[10]

> … the synodal institution that we are today called to serve in its supreme form derives its origin from the depths of the mystery of the Church. It is not merely a matter of canonical tradition, which we have received and preserve, but of fundamental theological and doctrinal truth, without which there is no salvation. In confessing our faith in the holy Creed in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, at the same time we proclaim her synodality which incarnates in history all those characteristics of the mystery of the Church, that is to say, her unity, holiness, universality and apostolicity. Without synodality, the unity of the Church is severed, the sanctity of its members is reduced to mere individual morality and articulation about

> virtue, catholicity is sacrificed in favour of particular individual, collective, national and other secular interests or intentions, and the apostolic message falls prey to various heresies and ruses of human reason.

This quotation was used by Archbishop Job in his seminal publication on the perspectives and challenges of primacy and synodality in the Orthodox Church today.[11] He noted that "the Orthodox tradition has always emphasized the importance of conciliarity or synodality, which it identifies as being ontologically linked to the very nature of the church".[12] He also cited the address of Pope Francis at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops: it is "precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium".[13] The Pope called for greater synodality to establish ways of communion, participation, and mission at every level of the church.

Primacy and Synodality: The Way Forward According to the Catholic and Orthodox Churches

In 2019, the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group published a comprehensive document to complement the official international dialogue between the two churches, entitled *Serving Communion: Re-thinking the Relationship between Primacy and Synodality*.[14] This extensive, well-structured and focused working paper has three dimensions on which it grounds its theological analysis: (i) hermeneutics in the ecumenical dialogue present in specific historical and cultural contexts, (ii) the history of the church, notably during the medieval period, and (iii) systematic theology, notably with respect to the role of church authority and the interpretations of primacy and synodality. This document

> brings as an element of novelty in the documents of the ecumenical dialogue the section dedicated to hermeneutics as a theoretical foundation for the theological and historical analysis of the elements that create dissension. … [It is] a paradigmatic model for tackling church-divisive issues.[15]

In the words of Paul McPartlan – Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology and Ecumenism at The Catholic University of

America and member of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church since 2005[16] – this publication is a "balanced and charitable study of the issue of primacy and synodality, happily free from polemic and ideology, and is greatly to be welcomed. It resonates in many ways with the principles of Catholic teaching and theology today, and also with the work of the official international dialogue".[17]

The Bishop of Rome: Primacy and synodality in the ecumenical dialogues and in the responses to the encyclical Ut unum sint is a study published earlier this year by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity within the Holy See.[18] Further to addressing primacy and synodality not as opposing ecclesial dimensions but as mutually interdependent – in the words of the Prefect of the Dicastery, Cardinal Kurt Koch, "primacy must be exercised in a synodal way, and synodality requires primacy"[19] – this publication recommends building bridges between dialogues so that they enrich one another: local and international, official and unofficial, bilateral and multilateral, Eastern and Western.[20] A commentary on this study was published by Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm – the moderator of the central committee of the World Council of Churches – in *The Ecumenical Review*.[21] In his commentary, Bishop Bedford-Strohm noted that "the fact that it is simply entitled 'The Bishop of Rome', and not 'The Vicar of Christ' or 'The Primacy of the Pope', is itself an expression of a serious attempt … to respond in a spirit of love to the various testimonies of ecumenical dialogues".[22]

The dogmatic definitions included in Vatican I represent a significant hurdle in the synodal path.[23] Besides clarifying the Catholic doctrine with respect to the philosophical tendencies of the time, they addressed the doctrine of the primacy (supremacy) and infallibility of the Pope.[24] Massimo Faggioli argued that *Pastor Aeternus* "is not about papal infallibility, but about papal primacy. … It is the papal primacy of jurisdiction that has acquired a greater scope than it actually had in 1870".[25] Kristin Colberg noted that

> proponents of synodality often interpret Vatican I's definition of papal primacy as an obstacle to the synodal path. Recent scholarship, however, suggests ways that Vatican I need not present a stumbling block; rather, when properly contextualized and interpreted, *Pastor*

> *Aeternus* has the potential to illumine the inherent dynamism between primacy and synodality".[26]

In her study she proposed approaches to Vatican I and synodality which encourage towards "more responsive ecclesial structures in the diverse and changing church of today".[27] The document issued by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity suggested that redefining, or possibly rewording, the original dogmatic definitions ensured the original meaning was comprehendible and acceptable in the contemporary ecumenical context.[28] This suggestion is worth noting, notwithstanding Colberg's valid argument that rather than reading primacy and synodality as competing concerns, one should re-envision the relation between the two "by broadening three horizons: the meaning of 'synodality', the interpretations of Vatican I's teaching on papal primacy, and the exercise of primacy in a synodal church."[29] Whilst addressing the legacy and challenges of Vatican I, Faggioli noted that

> The role of the papacy as the agent of reconciliation among religions is a post–Vatican II development. …
> Pope Francis' grand opening ... of the debate on ecclesial synodality in the Catholic Church is an act of reception of Vatican II, but also of Vatican I because it leverages a Petrine ministry.[30]

Implementation of Synodality

Archbishop Job maintained that

> The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church in 2016 should be perceived and received as a genuine manifestation of synodality at the beginning of the 21st century. It has reminded us that it is within the exercise of primacy and synodality at the universal level that the unity and the orthodoxy of the church is guaranteed. Its message referred to the proposal for the Holy and Great Council to become a regular institution to be convened every seven or ten years. By saying this, the Holy and Great Council has perhaps inaugurated a new era of synodality in the Orthodox Church on the universal level. This is perhaps the greatest contribution of the Holy and Great Council in an era of globalization, when the pastoral problems encountered by each local autocephalous church, due to a growing secularization of the world, are very similar and need a common synodal response.[31]

Morariu presented the Romanian Orthodox Diocese in Canada as, de facto, an illustration of secularism and political theology in a society where

> compared to other countries from the European space, for example, the level of secularisation is deeper. Events like the 'revolution tranquille'[32] have shifted the approach on religion and there are still debates related to the situation of the indigenous people and how certain Catholic priests abused them.[33]

Archbishop Job argued that, unlike in the Catholic church, "the implementation of synodality at the local level and universal level remains problematic or challenging in the Orthodox Church today".[34] Although, in theory, most Orthodox theologians welcomed the three levels of synodality outlined in the Ravenna and Chieti documents, synodality is far from being implemented at a local and universal level. This seems not to be the case with the Romanian Orthodox Diocese in Canada, as Morariu outlined in a chapter of his work.[35] This diocese is working hard to implement synodality at least at the local level. The initiatives mentioned by Morariu include gracious listening to each individual as a member of the Church and options to take on activities like youth camps that bring together other members of the community. These are pragmatic, achievable ways of putting synodality into practice; they are proposed as a response to the realities of and feedback from the community which compelled the church to take action. Reading the signs of the times and actively engaging with and responding to them is an optimal form of consciously driven synodality at the local level.

The Orthodox Church of Ukraine: A case of Ethnophyletism?

One can trace the present war in Ukraine to the outbreak of civil war in the country in February 2014 which was instigated and supported by foreign powers. The war (to use the language of the West) or special military operation (to use Russia's) which commenced in February 2024 in Ukraine is a continuation of the 2014 events. The genesis of the problem pre-dates the Second World War; it can be personified in the antagonism between the Greek Catholic West falling under the jurisdiction of the Holy See versus the Orthodox East falling under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. Besides the

Ukrainian Head of State, the other two main heads of states involved are the presidents of the United States and of the Russian Federation, namely the Catholic Joe Biden – who was US Vice President during the outbreak of the 2014 civil war and subsequently[36] – and the Orthodox Vladimir Putin, respectively. All are lawyers by education. Due to limitations arising from the current professional position held by the author,[37] I cannot delve further into this sensitive topic.[38]

Notwithstanding my professional constraints, there is no harm in putting forward the following, certainly not exhaustive, list of questions related to the subject of this academic writing:

1. Both the Ukrainian government and the newly formed Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) claim to support democratic values and religious freedom, yet they implement restrictive measures against the Ukraine Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate, arguably infringing on minority rights. How does one reconcile these actions with the presumed commitment to democratic principles, especially when they mirror the same criticised oppressive tactics displayed by Russia in its approach to the church?

2. Considering that the establishment of the OCU is mainly a national project backed by the Ukrainian government, do the nationalistic motivations within the OCU and the government undermine the Orthodox ideal of ecclesial unity? Could this nationalism not only alienate minority Orthodox communities – such as the one affiliated to Moscow and others (Bulgarian, Romanian, etc.) – but also damage Ukraine's standing in the global Orthodox world?

3. In recent times, some Orthodox theologians raised concerns regarding ethnophyletism, that is, prioritising national identity within the church. With respect to national Orthodox churches emerging in Ukraine and other regions, how do we perceive the border between healthy national identity and potential ethnophyletism within Orthodoxy? Could national churches inadvertently elevate national interests above ecclesial unity?

4. Given that the calling of the Orthodox Church is to transcend earthly divisions, how should one view, from a theological perspective, the close alignment between certain national Orthodox churches and their respective governments, especially when political tensions drive ecclesial separation? Could this alignment be seen as compromising the Church's mission, or is it simply a contextual necessity? For example, it is a fact that the Romanian Patriarchate wanted to create a religious non-governmental organisation in Ukraine but approval is still pending.

Fascism, Communism and Ecumenism

Although in the mid-first century Christianity appeared as a religious group within Judaism – one of the earlier monotheistic religions in world history – worshipers of both faiths co-existed. Later, the relationship between them, notably with respect to the Catholic Church, became more complex. Historically it is grounded in Christian theology, which blamed the Jews for killing Jesus. The rulers of Catholic territories practiced antisemitism, which led to persecution, violence and discrimination against the Jews, including their expulsion from Catholic lands.[39] With the rise of nationalism and industrialisation in Europe, political antisemitism increased due to economic conflicts between Jews and non-Jews. In the early twentieth century, hatred towards the Jews peaked during the Great Depression and was manifested through the Holocaust – a statement of ultimate human evil – when millions of European Jews were systematically exterminated in occupied Poland by Nazi Germany and its collaborators.[40] Vatican II improved the relationship between the Catholic Church and Judaism. *Nostra aetate*[41] is the first declaration in the history of the Catholic Church focused on the relationship of the Church with the Jews. It repudiated the accusation of Jewish deicide and officially condemned antisemitism. Later, it established the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jewish community to address the harm caused by past persecutions, with the Vatican formally apologising for its lack of action and silence during the Holocaust.[42]

Whilst Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) personified the radical far-right in Germany, Stepan Andriyovych Bandera (1909–1959) and Corneliu Zelea Codreanu (1899–1938) represented the far-right in

today's Ukraine and Romania, respectively. Bandera, the son of a Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest, was the leader of the militant wing of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists.[43] He was a highly controversial figure – some hail him as a hero while others denounce him as a fascist and/or Nazi collaborator; his legacy gained traction following Russia's intervention in Ukraine in 2022. During World War II, his followers – the Banderites – exterminated Polish and Jewish civilians.[44] Codreanu was the leader of the Legion of the Archangel Michael, also known as the Legionary Movement, which he founded in 1927 at a time when Romania was Francophile. The Legion – "arguably the most unusual mass movement of interwar Europe"[45] – was a Romanian religious, anti-democratic, anti-capitalist, anti-communist, and anti-Semitic, fascist movement "based on the millennialist cult of the Archangel Michael… [It is] generally considered an unusual 'variety of fascism' mostly because of its mysticism and religious ritualism".[46] Unlike other European contemporaries, the Legion "willingly inserted strong elements of Orthodox Christianity into its political ideology to the point of becoming one of the rare modern European political movements with a religious ideological structure."[47] Codreanu promoted a xenophobic, exclusive ultra-nationalism. He rejected French ideals in favour of the restoration of authentic Eastern Orthodox values and the glory of Romania's folk culture, which he celebrated as a statement of "Romanian genius".[48] Following the Legion's support for the ultranationalist and authoritarian vision of Ion Antonescu (1882–1946), Romania was declared a "National Legionary State", with the Legion as the only legal party in the country. Once in power, the Legion intensified existing anti-Semitic legislation which led to violence against and executions of Jews.

According to Morariu, both the Legionary Movement and the post-World War II communist regime in Romania had their own messianisms. Codreanu and the only two Communist leaders – Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (1901–1965) and Nicolae Ceaușescu (1918–1989) – had charisma and enjoyed a cult of personality. Both regimes used religion as a medium, but Ceaușescu used it in an ecumenical context. As Morariu pointed out in his conclusions, the communists understood that religion can be used as a tool to create the appearance of religious freedom and therefore accepted the Romanian Orthodox Church. He noted that despite political

pressures, its involvement "in the Ecumenical Movement bore fruits that are still important today and that contributed to the creation of bridges of dialogue with other Churches".[49]

Morariu supported his claim by referring to Andrei Scrima (1925–2000), a prominent Romanian Orthodox theologian whom he has been researching in recent years.[50] Scrima became the personal delegate of the ecumenical patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople to Vatican II after refusing to return to Communist Romania. As an archimandrite of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, he was involved in the meeting between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I in Jerusalem in 1964 which led to the rescinding of the excommunication of 1054 AD, the year of the Great Schism between the churches of the Greek East and the Latin West. The retraction of this excommunication was a major leap in restoring the relations between Rome and Constantinople, along with other Eastern Orthodox patriarchates. As a result, the Joint Catholic-Orthodox Declaration was issued and read simultaneously at a public meeting of Vatican II and at a special ceremony in Istanbul (Constantinople).[51] Why was Scrima so relevant to the government of Bucharest at the time? The Romanian authorities were interested not only in his ideas about ecumenism but also in the aspiration "to create a good image using the Ecumenical Movement, the World Council of Churches and the [sic] dialogue with the Catholic Church as tools in the accomplishment of this purpose".[52] The government of Bucharest was interested in using ecumenism "in order to create the illusion of democracy and freedom"[53] and it attempted "to use the ecumenical dialogue platform to simulate transparency and democracy [of its government]. This is one of the reasons why today, in [Eastern European] countries, there is a certain reticence (especially among the Eastern-Orthodox people, who are in the majority there), towards Ecumenism".[54]

In the Name of Humanity

Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Fratelli tutti*[55] called for human fraternity and solidarity – universal fraternity without borders – and appealed for a rejection of war. Although there is no mention of "Islam" or "Muslims", this topic was tackled in the subsequent *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*,[56] co-issued

by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of al-Azha Sheik Ahmed el-Tayeb. According to the former, this joint statement was "no mere diplomatic gesture, but a reflection born of dialogue and common commitment".[57]

Noting in *Fratelli tutti* that the "conditions that favour the outbreak of wars are once again increasing",[58] His Holiness reiterated his position, which he shared with the members of the United Nations General Assembly:[59]

> war is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment. If we want true integral human development for all, we must work tirelessly to avoid war between nations and peoples. To this end, there is a need to ensure the uncontested rule of law and tireless recourse to negotiation, mediation and arbitration, as proposed by the Charter of the United Nations, which constitutes truly a fundamental juridical norm.

Wars and military conflicts are driven by greed, power and ideology; religion is not a cause but an excuse. They are sadistic acts. Gratification is derived from inflicting pain, suffering and/or humiliation on the other, elements which are not even found in the rules of the jungle. Predators in the animal realm kill to eat, which is a survival instinct; they do not hunt in order to torture. Wars and military conflicts happen when diplomacy fails.

A conflict that has been ongoing for several decades, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, indicates that no one wants a resolution.[60] In this case, the war is not about religion – Judaic Isreal versus Islamic Arab states – but about land and the self-determination of Palestinians (including those of Christian faith) within the territory of the former Mandatory Palestine.[61] Historically, after the founding of Islam, the relationship between Judaism and Islam was respectable. When Christians persecuted the Jews, Muslims offered them refuge and protected them. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all Abrahamic monotheistic religions; they have a common origin which grounds their respective intrinsic value systems. Not only do they all worship one God, but they also value moral life based on prayer, almsgiving and fasting. They all share similar values, teachings and morality, as their spiritual traditions have the same roots. Moses, the foremost Hebrew prophet in Judaism, is acknowledged by both Christianity and Islam as one of their major prophets.

The Joint Catholic-Orthodox Declaration of 1965 between the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches did not halt the schism but was a public manifestation of an aspiration for reconciliation. It rejected more than nine centuries of hostility. Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I's decision to adhere to such a declaration was bold. Not all Orthodox leaders agreed with the idea of rapprochement. He was publicly challenged by Metropolitan Philaret, President of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, in 1965 in an open letter, where he argued that

> no union of the Roman Church with us is possible until it renounces its new doctrines, and no communion in prayer can be restored with it without a decision of all churches, which, however, can hardly be possible before the liberation of the Church of Russia which at present has to live in catacombs. …
> May such treason against Orthodoxy not enter between us.[62]

Metropolitan Philaret concluded his plea by requesting His Holiness

> to put an end to the confusion, because the way you have chosen to follow, even if it would bring you to a union with the Roman Catholics, would provoke a schism in the Orthodox world. Surely even many of your spiritual children will prefer faithfulness to Orthodoxy instead of the idea of a compromising union with the heterodox without their full harmony with us in the truth.[63]

Nowadays, the Catholic and Orthodox Churches are not in "full communion" because of enduring doctrinal and ecclesiastical differences. Yet nearly six decades after this declaration, the relations between the two have improved; certainly, neither side calls the other heretic. No schism within the Orthodox Church arose because of this declaration. On the contrary, in February 2016, Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia and Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, the largest of the Eastern Orthodox churches, met in Cuba and issued a Joint Declaration,[64] the first of its kind, which called for fraternity and solidarity. Although no immediate rapprochement is foreseen, both primates called for restoration of Christian unity. The declaration includes references to the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, wars in the region, the Greek Catholic Churches and the conflict in Ukraine:

> 25. It is our hope that our meeting may also contribute to reconciliation wherever tensions exist between Greek Catholics and Orthodox. It is today clear that the past method of 'uniatism', understood as the union of one community to the other, separating it from its Church, is not the way to re–establish unity. Nonetheless, the ecclesial communities which emerged in these historical circumstances have the right to exist and to undertake all that is necessary to meet the spiritual needs of their faithful, while seeking to live in peace with their neighbours. Orthodox and Greek Catholics are in need of reconciliation and of mutually acceptable forms of co–existence.
>
> 26. We deplore the hostility in Ukraine that has already caused many victims, inflicted innumerable wounds on peaceful inhabitants and thrown society into a deep economic and humanitarian crisis. We invite all the parts involved in the conflict to prudence, to social solidarity and to action aimed at constructing peace. We invite our Churches in Ukraine to work towards social harmony, to refrain from taking part in the confrontation, and to not support any further development of the conflict".[65]

These are only two points of the 30-point declaration; both call for ecumenism. Nevertheless, point 25 upset the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, whilst point 26 was disapproved of by the Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate, a "schismatic group" according to the Moscow Patriarchate. The present context consists of one of the bloodiest, deadliest conflicts since the World War II, where civilians bore the brunt of violence.

As history repeats itself and war rages, we should aim to exploit that which strengthens human civilisation, not support acts that bring about its destruction. The way forward goes beyond the strict Christian understanding of the term ecumenism, that is, the aim to bring different Christian denominations closer. Its Greek-Latin etymology is expressive of the more inclusive essence of the term: the Greek word 'oikoumenē' translates as 'the inhabited world' whilst the Latin 'oecumenicus' translates as 'worldwide'. In this sense, one may read ecumenism as a term aimed at reconciling, building bridges to enrich one another irrespective of one's local or international, official or unofficial, bilateral or multilateral, Eastern or Western, Northern or Southern position.

Reconciliation is not a negotiated peace, nor is it the result of deals to safeguard individualistic, or even worse, egoistic interests. Diversity in ethnicity, denomination, ideology, social status,

language, culture or nation is inspirational. Reconciliation brings humanity together in a unity enriched by differences not uniformity. Reconciliation represents metaphorical bridge-building between peoples based on their essence and humanity; it is an opportunity to express humanity.[66] In national and international fora, one may argue for the Darwinian axiom of "survival of the fittest",[67] with the national interest prevailing, but it is imperative to recall that beyond nationality there is humanity. The same applies to the distinct categories within a given society: ethnicity, denomination, ideology, social status, language and culture. Just co–existence amongst all is the future of humanity. Reconciliation is a process; the first step is a desire to maintain amicable relations and the second is finding the courage to take such a step; it is based on mutual respect.

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NOTES:

[1] The twenty-one ecumenical councils recognised by the Roman Catholic Church are: (i) Nicaea I (325), (ii) Constantinople I (381), (iii) Ephesus (431), (iv) Chalcedon (451), (v) Constantinople II (553), (vi) Constantinople III (680), (vii) Nicaea II (787), (viii) Constantinople IV (869), (ix) Lateran I (1123), (x) Lateran II (1139), (xi) Lateran III (1179), (xii) Lateran IV (1215), (xiii) Lyon I (1245), (xiv) Lyon II (1274), (xv) Vienne (1311), (xvi) Constance (1414), (xvii) Florence (1438-1443), (xviii) Lateran V (1512-1517), (xix) Trent (1545-1549, 1551-1552, 1562-1563), (xx) Vatican I (1869-1870), and (xxi) Vatican II (1962-1965) (Karl Keating, "The 21 Ecumenical Councils", *Catholic Answers Magazine,* 6/1/1993, https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/the-21-ecumenical-councils, accessed 09/11/2024.
Archbishop Job (Getcha) of Telmessos notes that, particularly from the fourth century onwards, whilst the primacy of the See of Rome in the West was traced back to St Peter's role among the Apostles, this notion was not accepted in the East. See: Archbishop Job (Getcha) of Telmessos, "The Perspectives and Challenges of

Primacy and Synodality in the Orthodox Church Today," in *The Ecumenical Review,* 72(3), 2020, pp. 356-369, 360, https://doi.org/10.1111/erev.12521.

[2] The objective of this council was to confront modern ideology that considered faith to be part of the evolution of history. The context was the unfolding political realities – the aftermath of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars and Gallicanism – including the "Risorgimento," which was a direct threat to the Papal States.

[3] Vatican I, *"Pastor Aeternus*, 18 luglio 1870, Costituzione dogmatica," in: Ugo Bellocchi, (ed.), *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*, vol. IV: Pio IX (1846-1878), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano, 1995, pp. 334-340. Vatican I was interrupted owing to the intention that it would continue at the end of the conflict. But then Garibaldi reached Rome and occupied it; thus, until February 1929 the Pope was considered "imprisoned" in the Vatican. The matter was officially and formally declared "closed" in 1960 by Pope John XXIII during the official opening of the Vatican II.

[4] Massimo Faggioli, "Modernization of the Papacy and Catholicism in the Postmodern: Legacy and Challenges to Vatican I," in *Horizons*, 47, no. 1, 2020, pp. 115-119: 115, https://doi.org/10.1017/hor.2020.44.

Contemporary scholars regard Vatican I as the culmination of the ultramontanist movement rather than modernisation of the Church. This movement took shape in France, particularly at the end of the eighteenth century, as a reaction to the revolutionary uprisings.

[5] Pope Francis, *Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group*, Clementine Hall, Vatican City, Oct. 7, 2021. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2021/october/ documents/ 20211007-gruppo-ortodossocattolico-santireneo.html, accessed 09/11/2024.

[6] Archbishop Job, *op. cit.*

[7] Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, *Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church: Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority,* Ravenna, Oct. 13, 2007, https://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-orientale/chiese-ortodosse-di-tradizione-bizantina/commissione-mista-internazionale-per-il-dialogo-teologico-tra-la/documenti-di-dialogo.html, accessed 09/11/2024.

[8] Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, *Synodality and Primacy during the First Millennium: Towards a Common Understanding in Service to the Unity of the Church,* Chieti, Sept. 21, 2016, http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-orientale/chiese-ortodosse-di-tradizione-bizantina/commissione-mista-internazionale-per-il-dialogo-teologico-tra-la/documenti-di-dialogo/testo-in-inglese1.pdf, accessed 09/11/2024.

[9] *Ibidem.* Officially there was "communion" during the first five centuries, and its guarantor was the Emperor. From the beginning there were shifts between local churches based upon theological/pastoral approaches. For example, the Council of Jerusalem in the Acts of the Apostles, and later – in the second-to-third century – two different theological approaches emerged: the theological school of Alexandria and

that of Antioch. Also, it is imperative to note that none of the first ecumenical councils could start without the presence of the papal legates.

[10] "Opening Address by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the Inaugural Session of the Holy and Great Council," June 20, 2016, https://www.holycouncil.org/-/opening-ecumenical-patriarch, accessed 09/11/2024.

[11] Archbishop Job, *op. cit.*

[12] *Ibidem,* p. 356.

[13] "Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops: Address of His Holiness Pope Francis," October 17, 2015, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html, accessed 09/11/2024. In the opinion of Archbishop Job, Pope Francis "suggested that the Catholic Church has to learn from the Orthodox Church on this point" (Archbishop Job, *op. cit.,* p. 357).

[14] Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group, *Serving Communion: Re-thinking the Relationship between Primacy and Synodality*, Marymount Institute Press, Los Angeles, 2019. The preface of this study was authored by the two co-chairmen: the German Roman Catholic Bishop Gerhard Feige – a member of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity and chairperson of the Ecumenical Commission of the German Bishops' Conference – and the Romanian Metropolitan Serafim Joantă of Germany and Central Europe.

[15] Mihail Comănoiu, "Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox–Catholic Working Group. *Serving Communion: Re-thinking the Relationship between Primacy and Synodality,* Marymount Institute Press, Los Angeles, 2019," in *The Ecumenical Review*, 73, no. 2 (2021), pp. 322-325, https://doi.org/10.1111/erev.12596.

[16] The Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church is instrumental in the dialogue between the two Christian churches.

[17] Paul McPartlan, "Serving Communion: Re-Thinking the Relationship between Primacy and Synodality," in *Ecclesiology*, 16, no. 1, 2020, pp. 3-11, https://doi.org/10.1163/17455316-01601002.

[18] Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, *The Bishop of Rome: Primacy and synodality in the ecumenical dialogues and in the responses to the encyclical* Ut unum sint, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City, 2024, http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/news/2024/2024-06-13-il-vescovo-di-roma-nuovo-documento-dpuc.html, accessed 09/11/2024.
This study – published with the approval of Pope Francis and presented at a press conference at the Holy See Press Office on June 13, 2024 (https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2024/06/13/240613f.html, accessed 09/11/2024) – discusses primacy and synodality in the ecumenical discourses and includes a synopsis of the reactions at the time to the encyclical *Ut unum sint* (John Paul II, *Ut unum sint: On Commitment to Ecumenism,* Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City, May 25 1995, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html, accessed 09/11/2024.

[19] Andrea Tornielli, "Koch: Papal primacy is service, exercised in a synodal manner," in *Vatican News,* June 13, 2024, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2024-06/koch-papal-primacy-is-service-exercised-in-a-synodal-manner.html, accessed 09/11/2024.
[20] This document concludes with a proposal from the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity to identify "the most significant suggestions for a renewed exercise of the ministry of unity of the Bishop of Rome, 'recognized by one and all'" ("The Bishop of Rome: Primacy and Synodality in the Ecumenical Dialogues and in the Responses to the Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*," in *The Ecumenical Review*, 76, no. 3, 2024, pp. 273-281: 273, https://doi.org/10.1111/erev.12863.
[21] *Ibid.,* pp. 276-281.
[22] *Ibid.,* p. 273.
[23] Some dialogues appreciate the unique historical context surrounding Vatican I. It was convoked under the rising threat of the Kingdom of Italy encroaching on the Papal States and was adjourned after Italian soldiers marched on Rome.
[24] The council called for the consolidation of papal authority, a position widely supported by all forces within the church: "In each step, Pius IX found strong backing from ultramontane forces within the church, not just among the bishops, but from clergy, religious (especially the Jesuits!), laity, and the Catholic press, who saw the strong assertion of papal authority as the necessary response to the crisis the church faced" (Jeffrey von Arx, "Vatican I's Teaching on Papal Infallibility: Nineteenth-century historical context and twenty-first century relevance," in *Horizons*, 47, no. 1, 2020, pp. 109-114: 112, https://doi.org/10.1017/hor.2020.43.
[25] Massimo Faggioli, *op. cit.,* p. 115. With respect to the latter statement, Faggioli refers to Margaret O'Gara ("Three Successive Steps toward Understanding Papal Primacy in Vatican I," in *The Jurist*, 64, 2004, pp. 208-223) who, in turn, followed Klaus Schatz *(Papal Primacy: From Its Origins to the Present*, trans. John A. Otto and Linda M. Maloney, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1996).
[26] Kristin Colberg, "Expanding Horizons: 150 Years after Vatican I: Toward a Renewed Relationship between Synodality and Primacy," in *Theological Studies,* 83, no. 1, 2022, pp. 70-83: 70, https://doi.org/10.1177/00405639221075054.
[27] *Ibidem.*
[28] This point was noted in Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, *The Bishop of Rome: Primacy and synodality in the ecumenical dialogues and in the responses to the encyclical* Ut unum sint.
[29] Colberg, *op. cit.,* p. 71.
[30] Massimo Faggioli, *op. cit.,* pp. 118, 119.
[31] Archbishop Job, *op. cit.,* p. 356.
[32] For more information about this subject, Morariu refers to Réjean Pelletier, "La Révolution tranquille," in *Le Québec en jeu*, Presses de l'Université de Montréal, Montréal, 1992, https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pum.15288.
[33] See Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Ecumenism, Primacy, Authority and Love: Faces of a complex theological reality,* Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2024, p. 71.
[34] Archbishop Job, *op. cit.,* p. 360.
[35] See Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Ecumenism, Primacy …,* pp. 59-72.

[36] Biden was Vice President of the United States for both terms of the Barack Obama presidency; the first ran from 2009 to 2013 and the second from 2013 to 2017.
[37] The author has served in the role of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of his homeland, Malta, to the Balkans since 2014.
[38] The civil war in Ukraine between the pro-Russia and pro-West factions was further nourished by the decision of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople to establish the Orthodox Church of Ukraine an autocephal diocese in those territories when he knew that the jurisdiction was not his but that of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.
[39] The reason was neither theological nor religious but one of financial interests. The Jews had monopoly on the banks, and it was only in the latter part of fifteenth century – on the initiative of some Franciscan friars – that the Catholic Church institutionalised the so-called 'Monte di Pietà' in order not to leave hegemony over the finances of Europe in the hands of the Jews.
[40] Other groups were also exterminated during this purge based on their ethnicity (notably the Roma and Sinti), political beliefs, disability or sexual orientation.
[41] Pope Paul VI, "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions – Nostra aetate", October 28, 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html, accessed 09/11/2024.
[42] Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *We Remember: A reflection on the Shoah*, March 16, 1998, https://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/commissione-per-i-rapporti-religiosi-con-l-ebraismo/commissione-per-i-rapporti-religiosi-con-l-ebraismo-crre/documenti-della-commissione/en1.html, accessed 09/11/2024.
[43] David R. Marples, "Stepan Bandera: The resurrection of a Ukrainian national hero," in *Europe-Asia Studies*, 58, no. 4, 2006, pp. 555-566, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130600652118.
[44] Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska, 2009.
[45] Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914–1945*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin, 1995, pp. 279-280.
[46] Constantin Iordachi, "Charisma, Religion, and Ideology: Romania's Interwar Legion of the Archangel Michael," in: John R. Lampe, Mark Mazower (eds), *Ideologies and National Identities*, Central European University Press, Budapest, 2004, pp. 19-53: 19. This book chapter was later expanded into the following monograph: Constantin Iordachi, *Charisma, Politics and Violence: The legion of the 'Archangel Michael' in inter-war Romania*, Trondheim Studies on East European Cultures and Societies, No. 15, 2004, https://www.ntnu.edu/documents/1295900401/1295966101/Nr%2B15_B5.pdf.
[47] Radu Ioanid, "The Sacralised Politics of the Romanian Iron Guard," in *Totalitarian Movements & Political Religions*, 5, no. 3, Winter 2004, pp. 419-453: 419, https://doi.org/10.1080/1469076042000312203.

[48] Richard J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century,* Routledge, London and New York, 1997, p. 115. Instead of Romanian traditional folk dress, the Romania's Francophile elite opted for Parisian style of the time.
[49] See Iuliu-Marius Morariu, *Ecumenism, Primacy…,* p. 97.
[50] See Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Ecumenism and Communism in the Romanian Context: Fr. Andre Scrima in the Archives of the Securitate," in *Religions,* 12, 2021, p. 719, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12090719; Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Elements of Father Andrei Scrima's Ecumenical Activity as Reflected in File No. 0005468 from the 'Securitate' Archives," in *Review of Ecumenical Studies,* 12, no. 3, 2020, pp. 497-511, https://doi.org/10.2478/ress-2020-0035.
[51] Pope Paul VI, Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I, "Joint Catholic-Orthodox Declaration of his Holiness Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I," Vatican City, Dec. 7, 1965, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1965/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19651207_common-declaration.html, accessed 09/11/2024.
[52] Iuliu-Marius Morariu, "Elements of Father Andrei Scrima's Ecumenical Activity …," pp. 510-511.
[53] *Idem,* "Ecumenism and Communism in the Romanian Context: Fr. Andre Scrima in the Archives of the Securitate…," p. 719.
[54] *Idem,* "Elements of Father Andrei Scrima's Ecumenical Activity…," p. 497.
[55] Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti: On fraternity and social friendship*, Oct. 3, 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica- fratelli-tutti.html, accessed 09/11/2024.
[56] Pope Francis, Sheik Ahmed el-Tayeb, *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together,* Abu Dhabi, Feb. 4, 2019, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html, accessed 09/11/2024.
[57] Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, paragraph 5. This statement was also highlighted in the *Catholic Herald* (Christopher Altieri, "Pope Francis releases Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti", in *Catholic Herald*, 4 October 2020, https://catholicherald.co.uk/pope-francis-releases-encyclical-letter-fratelli-tutti/, accessed 09/11/2024).
[58] *Idem, Fratelli Tutti*, paragraph 257.
[59] *Idem, Meeting with the members of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation: Address of the Holy Father*, United Nations Headquarters, New York, Sept. 25, 2015), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150925_onu-visita.html, accessed 09/11/2024.
[60] The Israeli–Arab military and political conflict dates to the first arrival of Jewish settlers in Ottoman Palestine in 1882 and was later supported by the 1917 Balfour Declaration which agreed to the setting up of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.
[61] Although Scrima supported the Arab cause, "his attitude towards the Palestinians and the Arab situation influenced neither the Jewish authorities to act against him, nor the Occidental societies to expel him from the universities where he was a teacher. His arguments were most probably well-sustained, and his attitude was perceived as

a personal honest perspective, which was not meant to upset anyone" (Morariu, "Elements of Father Andrei Scrima's Ecumenical Activity …," p. 509.
In the same spirit of Scrima, and while aware of the peace-loving Jewish people for whom I have utmost respect, I would be morally failing if I were not to put some questions with respect to the actions of the Israeli authorities: Isn't the establishment of Jewish settlements in occupied territories a form of expansionism expressed through the Nazi concept of Lebensraum, "living space"? Palestinian neighborhoods are systematically disappearing, as happened to Jewish ones in Nazi Germany. Have the ultra-nationalist Jewish settlers brought far-right political ideologies to power in Israel? With such an ideology in government, will the people of Palestine be subject to a holocaust such as the Jewish people endured during the World War II? The Palestinians have for decades been subject to persecution by the Israeli Government; its present conduct in Gaza tantamount to genocide. With moral clarity, Stephen Kapos – 87-year-old Holocaust survivor from Budapest – unequivocally stated that "Israel is committing genocide in Gaza" (Owen Jones, "Holocaust Survivor Tells Me: Israel is committing genocide", in *YouTube,* April 26, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4PFmz4MNdg, accessed 09/11/2024).

[62] Metropolitan Philaret*, A Protest to Patriarch Athenagoras: On the Lifting of the Anathemas of 1054*, Orthodox Christian Information Center, December 2/15 1965, http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/philaret_lifting.aspx, accessed 09/11/2024. Metropolitan Philaret was the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia from 1964 until his death in 1985.

[63] *Ibidem.*

[64] Pope Francis, Patriarch Kirill, "Joint Declaration of Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia," in *Activities of the Holy Father Pope Francis* Havana, Feb. 12, 2016, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco_20160212_dichiarazione-comune-kirill.html, accessed 09/11/2024. The meeting was made possible through Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev and Cardinal Koch, for the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church, respectively.

[65] *Ibidem*.

[66] This is in line with the teachings of Pope Francis: "It is good to cultivate a unity enriched by differences that will not yield to the temptation of a bland uniformity, which is never good. In this spirit, … discussions centre on appreciating how differing aspects present in our traditions, rather than giving rise to disagreements, can become legitimate opportunities for expressing the shared apostolic faith. …The Lord's peace is not a 'negotiated' peace, the fruit of agreements meant to safeguard interests, but a peace that reconciles, that brings together in unity" (Pope Francis, *Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Saint Irenaeus Joint Orthodox-Catholic Working Group).*

[67] Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species,* John Murray, London, 1869, pp. 91-164.

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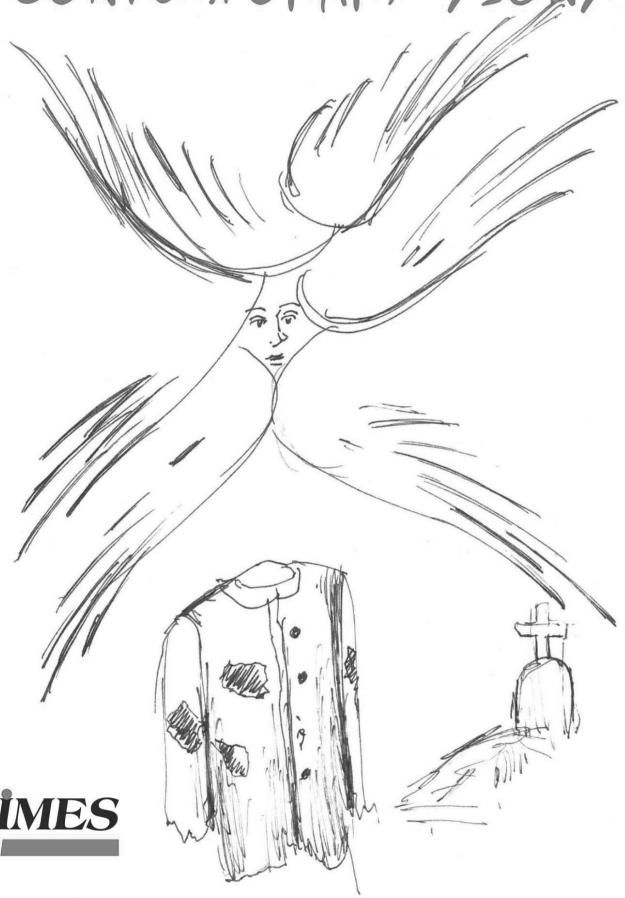
Marcel Miron

SEMNE CONTEMPORANE
CONTEMPORARY SIGNS



LIMES

VALENTINA-MONICA BARBA

Time and Space as a Place of Change in Lidia Vianu's *Kaleidoscope*

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of time for spirituality in human life. In the paper, the mark of time on space is taken as an analogy of the role of time on human spirituality. The conjunction of the effect of the passage of time on spatial environment and the effect of time on man can appear as a propaedeutic in the improvement of what is or should be at best man's life. To give life to such a conjunction, the declared purpose is supported by the study of some situations in Lidia Vianu's novel *Καλειδοσκόπιο* / *Kaleidoscope* / *Caleidoscop – Parallel Texts*. *Ediție bilingvă*. These refer to the decisions taken by the Romanian authorities regarding the ownership of space represented by residential buildings during periods under different political regimes and to how different individuals perceive ownership of residential buildings. In the end, the paper presents a detachment from any judgemental considerations, so as to allow only the importance of time in one's life to emerge.

Keywords: Ancestors, block, communist times, post-communist years, villa.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of time for spirituality in human life. In the paper, the mark of time on space is taken as an analogy of the role of time on human spirituality. The conjunction of the effect of the passage of time on spatial environment and the effect of time on man can appear as a propaedeutic in the improvement of what is or should be at best man's life. In order to make such a conjunction alive, the declared purpose is supported by the study of situations in Lidia Vianu's novel *Καλειδοσκόπιο* / *Kaleidoscope* / *Caleidoscop*. These refer to the decisions taken by the

Valentina-Monica Barba, PhD student, Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies, University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania.

Romanian authorities regarding the ownership of space represented by residential buildings during periods under different political regimes and to the way in which different individuals view ownership of residential buildings. Ultimately, the paper presents a detachment from any judgemental considerations, so as to let only the importance of time in one's life emerge.

About time and its import for man

From Kant's philosophical point of view, time is a form of "sensible intuition" and a condition of the "existence of things as phenomena".[1] This view of time does not take into account more elaborated views of time and space.[2] According to Scripture, time is a passage of man on Earth after he was expelled from Eden because he ate from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2, 17).[3]

Scripture presents two different states of existence. Man was put in the garden of Eden "to dress it and to keep it" (Gen. 2, 15). The inference is that man's life was to be without end. However, the continuation of the text in Genesis presents man's limited state of existence out of the garden of Eden. To understand man's fall from an unlimited to a limited state of existence, we are told that he was forbidden to eat from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" although he was allowed to eat of "every tree of the garden", and also that he possessed the knowledge necessary to give names to all the creatures which God created ("Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field" Gen. 2, 20) and to call his wife Woman (because "she was taken out of Man", Gen. 2, 23):

> **16** And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:
> **17** But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Gen. 2, 16–17)

After the man ate from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" and God saw that "the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" (Gen. 3, 22), God "sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken" (Gen. 3, 23), so that he

might not "take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Gen. 3, 22).

The measure of Adam's expulsion from Eden was the effect of his disobedient act, and was strictly related to man's knowledge of good and evil. This unruly-acquired binary judgement was deemed mandatory for putting an end to man's life. So man receives a performative utterance from God, who turns the gift of abundant food in Eden into hard work on Earth, until man exhaust his strength and dies: "[19] In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3, 19). Therefore, from the unlimited form of existence, man lives for a limited period of time. Heretofore, the name of man's wife was Woman; after the expulsion from Eden, Adam calls her Eve, as she was to become "the mother of all living" (Gen. 3, 20). Therefore, Eve is to bear children, as God tells her: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children" (Gen. 3, 16). Humans are to live a limited time on the physical plane, until they "return unto the ground" (Gen. 3, 19). Time becomes intrinsic to man's life by its very role in measuring human life like sand in an hourglass. Moreover, for human life on the physical plane, time takes its significance from the inexorable death of man.

In theological terms though, death is viewed not only as the end of a person's corporeal life, but is also described as a state of a person's soul after his corporeal death in the case a person's doings in life led to his eschatological death. Saint Augustine's sermon on the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord or Christmas decisively illustrates the distinction between death in eternity, everlasting life, and life in time, when he urges his audience to recognise that Jesus Christ was born in time and "adjusted himself to [man's] death" in order to enlighten man towards life:

> Wake up, mankind; for you God became man. *Rise, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten you* (Eph 5, 14). For you, I repeat, God became man. **You would have died for eternity, unless he had been born in time.** You would never be set free from the flesh of sin, unless he had taken to himself *the likeness of the flesh of sin* (Rom 8, 3). You would have been in the grip of everlasting misery, had it not been for the occurrence of this great mercy. **You would not have come back to life, unless he had adjusted himself to your death.** You would have faded away, if he

had not come to the rescue. You would have perished, if he had not come.[4] (Heavier emphasis mine.)

Since the knowledge of good and evil enables man to change, then time is essential for man to strive to overcome both good and evil during his lifespan or as long as he has time. In spiritual terms, man's ability for change was equated by John Climacus with climbing a ladder, which he called *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*.[5] Each of the thirty rungs of the ladder is an exercise in freeing man from a certain passion, where passions are attachments to material things, manifestations of affections and emotions, and all things which burden the heart and reveal it as impure. The operator of passing through a rung of the ladder is change. The roots of change come from the mind. Change itself involves will and effort over time. Then, there may be a certain period of time for a certain man to pass from one state of mind to another and to relieve himself from passions. A change of mind can be proven by confession and requires validation by a witness. The agent of change for the better is repentance. Through repentance man is able to progress towards *theosis* or union with God. Clement of Alexandria writes that "the Word [...] of God [...] became man just that you may learn from a man how it may be that man should become God".[6]

The pledge for the union of man with God is succinctly summarised by Archimandrite George, who avows that *theosis* is the union of man with God because, since man was "endowed 'in His image', man is called upon to be completed 'in His likeness'. This is Theosis. The Creator, God by nature, calls man to become a god by Grace".[7] He says that the Church Fathers argued that "God became man in order to make man a god. If God had not taken flesh, man would not be able to achieve Theosis".[8] Archimandrite George adds that since Lord Jesus was both man and God, He "has two perfect natures: divine and human", which "are joined 'without change, without confusion, without separation, and without division' in the one person of Christ [...]", and "because Christ is the eternal God-Man through the hypostatic union of the two natures in the person of Christ, human nature is irrevocably unified with the divine nature because Christ is eternally God-Man".[9]

Daniel the Patriarch of Romania defines the relation of man with time as the gift of earthly life, and emphasises the meaning of life as overcoming the physical plane and passing through death into

a spiritual state: “Heaven was made for people, so that people might live forever in the happiness, peace[,] and joy of the Most Holy Trinity. So[,] this gift of life is a gift not only for history, but also for eternity”.[10]

On space and its referential role in relation to time

In Kant’s transcendental aesthetics, space, along with time, are “two pure forms of sensuous intuition, as principles of knowledge *a priori*”.[11] Scripture mentions space as the place of Eden and also the place from which Adam was expelled from the Garden of Eden. As forms of intuition and conditions for the formation of representations for man, time and space are essential to allowing man to change. Time and space are the common ground of all mankind, where people can interact with each other and determine their future. Future itself is a corollary of time and change, and space is a witness thereof.

Philological support for the role of space in demonstrating change over time

Space as a witness of change over time has been chosen from the description of ownership of space represented by residential buildings under different political regimes in Lidia Vianu’s novel *Καλειδοσκόπιο / Kaleidoscope / Caleidoscop – Parallel Texts*.

The novel consists of a collection of lyrical narratives of autobiographical inspiration. When asked if the novel is autobiographical, the author said that, although the characters are fictional, what she wrote about her life is authentic. The events in the novel reflect the life of an intellectual during the communist and the post-communist period in Romania:

> It has many events which are mine, but they are mixed in totally imaginary characters and I could not say that it targets someone, or describes a specific character. Nonetheless, what happens there is my life, everyone's life, it is the communism and post-communism of an intellectual who has been studying English.[12]

The novel puts into sharp relief the lack of homogeneity in the ownership of space as residential buildings, both across eras and

across people. The actual eras are the communist years and the years after the 22nd of December 1989 in Romania.

Different attitudes of political regimes towards property ownership

The communist era brought changes to ownership of residential buildings. The underlying premises varied from political considerations to pragmatic sanctions *per se*. The latter stemmed from the lack of housing availability, but were also driven by easy ways to benefit certain individuals. For example, football players who were doing well in their careers were offered housing opportunities, and such opportunities came from confiscated houses. The owners who lived in these houses were entitled to no more than eight square metres per person, while the rest of the space was rented out to state tenants.[13]

In the post-communist years, residential buildings along with other types of property nationalised between the 6th of March 1945 and the 22nd of December 1989 were subject to laws which stipulated their restitution to their former owners. When post-communist legislation stipulated the restitution of property to the original owners and their descendants, a simultaneous change in attitudes towards property occurred. This reflects the antonymic effect which legislation can have under different political regimes.

Thus, a series of laws with their methodological norms, as well as related government decisions feature complicated provisions regarding who can own what – the ownership conditions being closely related to the previous destinations of the properties, as in the case of housing for authorities, guest houses, protocol houses, or other official buildings.[14] The laws have articles which establish conditions for the restitution in kind of residential properties, or for the payment of compensation for them. However, there are also stipulations designed to protect the tenants of the properties subject to restitution in kind. The benchmark, more or less, for all these facts is the European Convention on Human Rights.[15] These entanglements are but the effect of time which has permitted changes in the ownership and purpose of residential buildings, which otherwise are but places in space.

Different attitudes towards property ownership

The novel *Kaleidoscope* presents a lyrical description of the complicated situation of the restitution in kind of the author's heritage, namely, an apartment building and a villa built by the author's ancestors:

> It has been years since the regime changed. All this time, we have been struggling in vain to get my mother's house back. A house made by my ancestors. A block and villa.[16]

It shows the destination which different spaces in the block received after nationalisation:

> The ground floor and the two floors above are now harbouring a surgery, a publishing house, and a construction firm. I once caught sight of the familiar facade, from inside the high school which has extended its premises, and now has a common wall with our old house.[17]

It also mentions the villa, which is but a memory for the author, as she never visited it:

> Unseen, from the window of a classroom, I looked furtively, with sad, guilty eyes. Next to the block, I saw the smaller villa, which was supposed to have become my mother's dowry – the house where I should have been born, yet have never set foot in.[18]

Given the complexities of the cases in question, the novel shows that it would hardly be possible to satisfy all the claims for restitution in kind. This is the situation of the confiscated villa, which was already claimed by the author as her rightful inheritance. However, the state tenant who lived in the villa bought it from the state in the post-communist years:

> The villa was confiscated by communists in the 1940s. It was bought from the state by its tenant, despite the fact that I had already claimed it in Court.[19]

The story of the acquisition of the author's already claimed inheritance by a Court employee mirrors the different attitudes of individuals towards the ownership of space over time. This time, it was not a general political orientation which determined the outcome of the story, but the act of an individual who fulfilled her own desire. The simple conflict between the author's claim and the Court

employee – a caretaker – illustrates that the interweaving of time and space creates a locus in which people manifest differently in relation to the same property of space, in this case, the villa built by the author's ancestors. It also shows possible irregularities in the housing policies of the former regime, which would have allowed biases, as the Court employee who managed to buy the villa was born in a provincial town and should not have had any right to live in the Capital:

> That tenant was a caretaker in the building of the Court of Law. She knew all the judges. She had been born in some provincial town, under communism. At that time, you needed to have been born in Bucharest in order to live there.[20]

On the other hand, the nationalisation of the block of flats forced the author's family to reduce their living space to "the smallest room" of the five rooms on the first floor occupied by the author's family:

> My mother was born on the first floor of the block, where they lived in five sumptuous rooms, four of which looked onto the street, allowing in light at all hours of the day.
> We have not seen that apartment since 1971, when my grandmother died. Back then, my grandmother had been pushed into the smallest room, that faced the back yard, drab and lightless.[21]

The climax of the author's story about her ancestral homes reveals not only different perceptions of living spaces but also harmful attitudes generated by desires.[22] When the rightful owners of the villa filed a lawsuit, the Court employee waged a personal war against the legal inheritors of the space she was living in, by speaking obnoxiously towards the author's mother. Moreover, and rather surprisingly, she offered her biased intercession with the court on behalf of the author's lawyer as a kind of bargain so as to keep the villa and let the court give the block to the author:

> I just want our property back. Legally I am right, but the small dowry house has already been sold to a former tenant. She keeps phoning and swearing at my mother. She has made a good deal of money renting that house.
> My ancestors worked and saved all their lives in order to build the block and the villa. They hardly knew what history had in store for them: "esteemed workers" would be lodged there in the 1950s – each

family in one room. Ending with this woman, who knew all the ropes, and who became an owner herself.
I expect justice to be done, while she amicably talks to the judge, planning whom to bribe again, so that the final decision will be in her favour. A representative of the former working class, she abuses the real owner, my eighty-year-old mother, over the telephone.
The only time my lawyer accepted a face to face talk with her, this woman said:
"Drop the suit against my house, and I can help you get the block back in a week."[23]

Such complications are related to space – to ownership of certain aspects of space – and they can only take place in time. They define a particular time when they take place according to a set of rules and circumstances specific to that time. Whether these conditions placate one human being or another is less relevant to the fraction of time when it happens. The fact that the block built by the author's ancestors was returned to the author as a legal successor at a later date, in the post-communist years, is indicative of the peculiar circumstances of the time. The possibility of restitution existed, but was postponed.

The story of the change of ownership of the author's inheritance over time shows how the network of people's minds at a certain point in time varies from the network in people's minds at another point in time. Such networks are entanglements of legislation, mores, and individual decisions. They are decisions which carry the value of good or evil, since they take place in time and are proven by their effect on space. The possibility of changing the mind, which also occurs in time, gives rise to an opportunity for the improvement of the mind. The improvement of the mind gives an individual the possibility of escaping the polarity of good and evil.

The author's attitude towards life over time in the novel Kaleidoscope

The novel *Καλειδοσκόπιο / Kaleidoscope / Caleidoscop – Parallel Texts* presents the totality of the author's stories in time, from the beginning to almost the present – each of them standing for an image in a virtual kaleidoscope – a reality in itself – real but changeable – lived, but now living only in memory – complete, but

seen only in perspective. At a certain point, the author expresses the need to relinquish this kaleidoscopic vision:

> I am nearing that point in time where I shall feel at home somewhere else than in the reality I have inhabited for fifty-three years. I am not so sure I am ready for that, but the thought lies coiled at the back of my mind, just like my first house.[24]

Expressing a wish to relinquish the reality she has lived for over five decades sounds like a transition to another form of existence – an existence in which time has not yet been defined – an existence which actually transcends both time and space, or, according to Daniel the Patriarch, an existence like that of Christ after the Resurrection, when He is free from time and space; He is free from any material and social limitations. He cannot be held back even with a glance, as in the case of the journey to Emmaus when He disappears from the place where He was sitting with Luke and Cleopas (Luke 24, 30–31). The phrase 'Christ is risen' signifies Christ's transition to a new form of existence: to eternal life.[25]

Final considerations

This paper is making no judgement on thoughts or actions *per se*. It only presents governmental decisions, thoughts, and actions at different times in more or less recent history. It presents official thoughts during the communist era and official thoughts since the change of the political system – actions carried out at the level of the centralised communist government and actions taken by various individuals since the change of the regime. However, the things presented in this article should not be interpreted as judgments of individuals, governmental regimes, political policies, institutions, or anything else. They are meant to emphasise the importance of time for spirituality in human life, as the purpose of the paper was stated at the beginning. The paper addresses the imprint of time on space as an analogy with the role of time on human spirituality. The paper highlights how the effect of the passage of time on the spatial environment and the effect of time on man can be considered as a propaedeutic in improving human life in a spiritual sense.

Due to the human particularities, of which will[26] and desire[27] are two examples, the knowledge of good and evil functions as a

binary state of mind which is prone to polarisation. Therefore, it offers the opportunity for change. However, in order to be sensed, change requires a system of reference, and this is guaranteed by time. Referring to the verses in Genesis which picture existence in Eden – both before the fall in time because of eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and on condition of acquiring eternal life by eating of the tree of life – the assumption is that in Eden life exists independently of change or, in other words, since there is no time reference, no changes can occur of be felt.

This kind of reasoning is in line with the teaching of the Orthodox Christian Church, according to which, at death, man's condition remains the one in which he was at the moment of death or, in other words, after death man can no longer do anything for his soul. In this sense, Father Seraphim Rose describes the aerial places (toll-houses) through which the soul has to pass on its flight to Heaven and in which there are evil spirits who lure or frighten the soul to make it reveal its passions, or tax it for its passions.[28] Regarding the tradition of toll-houses, Father Seraphim quotes Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, who emphasises the fact that the Christian soul is assaulted by evil spirits on its way to Heaven:

> The teaching of the toll-houses is the teaching of the Church. *There is no doubt whatever* (emphasis in the original) that the holy Apostle Paul is speaking of them when he declares that Christians must do battle with the spirits of wickedness under the heavens (Eph. 6, 12).[29]

The eightieth verse of Psalm 118: "Let my heart be blameless in Thy statutes, that I may not be put to shame"[30] is convincingly commented by Bishop Theophan the Recluse: "in the person whose heart is pure and a stranger to passions, [toll-gatherers] cannot find anything to wrangle over".[31] If this is indeed the case, then this simple assumption convincingly emphasises the role of time for man.

The differences in attitude towards residential property under communism and during the post-communist years exemplified by the excerpts taken from *Kaleidoscope*, the difference between different people regarding the same property, as revealed in the same novel, and the difference in the attitude of the author of *Kaleidoscope* towards life at different moments of her life prove with certainty that there is a possibility of change over time for everyone. The reference for this change by which we must live is our Lord Jesus Christ – the example par excellence for human life. The path to change is

introspection, repentance, confession, and Eucharistic communion. The goal of change is *theosis* or union with God. The incentive for change is the awareness that there might exist a better place for man somewhere where time is not cut off by death. The rationale for change is the fact that the current human condition is but a temporary sojourn on earth followed by an inexorable death, followed by the possibility, or perhaps even the probability, of passing through the toll houses.

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[2] Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality. An Essay on Cosmolog*y, Gifford Lectures Delivered in the University of Edinburgh During the Session 1927–1928 Corrected edition by David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne, The Free Press, Macmillan, New York, 1978, pp. 70–72.
[3] All Bible references are from *King James Version,* https://www.biblegateway.com, accessed 05/10/2024.
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[7] Archimandrite George, *Theosis. The True Purpose of Human Life* Holy Monastery of Saint Gregorios, Mount Athos, 2006, p. 21.
[8] *Ibidem,* p. 24.
[9] *Ibid.,* p. 28.
[10] Daniel, Patriarch of Romania, "The gift of earthly life, a gift for eternity: Patriarch Daniel puts the March for Life into transcendent perspective," Basilica.ro, March 25, 2024,
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[11] Immanuel Kant, *op. cit.,* p. 65.
[12] Lidia Vianu, Interviu cu Bogdan Radu Stănescu, „Jurnal cultural" [Interview with Bogdan Radu Stănescu for the "Cultural Journal"] on *TVR Cultural,* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ku7YQEVlWM, accessed 11/16/2023.
[13] Andrei Tudor Mihail and Andrei Răzvan Voinea, *Communist Football and Urban History in Bucharest,* Collection Réflexions sportives, Éditions CIES, Neuchâtel, 2022, pp. 22–26.

[14] "Lege Nr. 112 din 25 noiembrie 1995 pentru reglementarea situației juridice a unor imobile cu destinația de locuințe, trecute în proprietatea statului [Law No. 112 of 25th November 1995 regulating the legal situation of certain residential properties transferred to state ownership]," in *Monitorul Oficial* Nr. 279, Nov. 29, 1995.

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[15] European Convention on Human Rights, https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/convention_ENG, accessed 06/10/2024, p. 33.

[16] Lidia Vianu, *Καλειδοσκόπιο/Kaleidoscope/Caleidoscop—Parallel Text, Ediție bilingvă,* Advisor for the series: Anne Stewart, Eikon, București, 2023, p. 30.

[17] *Ibidem,* p. 30.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] *Ibid*.

[22] Tim Schroeder, "Desire," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Summer 2020 Edition, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2020/entries/desire/, accessed 06/11/2024.

[23] Lidia Vianu, *op. cit*., pp. 36–38.

[24] *Ibidem,* p. 232.

[25] Daniel, Patriarch of Romania, "Cuvântul Patriarhului Daniel: Învierea lui Hristos este temelia învierii tuturor oamenilor [Patriarch Daniel's Homily: Christ's Resurrection is the foundation of the resurrection of all people]," Basilica.ro, https://basilica.ro/cuvantul-patriarhului-daniel-invierea-lui-hristos-este-temelia-invierii-tuturor-oamenilor/, accessed 06/25/2025.

[26] Timothy O'Connor and Christopher Franklin, "Free Will," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), Winter 2022 Edition, URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2022/entries/freewill/, accessed 06/11/2024.

[27] Tim Schroeder, *op. cit.*

[28] Hieromonk Seraphim Rose, *The Soul After Death. Contemporary "After-Death" experiences in the light of the orthodox teaching on the afterlife*, Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, California, [1980], 1982, https://archive.org/details/soulafterdeathco0000rose/mode/2up?view=theater, accessed 06/11/2024, pp. 75–78.

[29] *Ibidem,* pp. 78–79.

[30] *Ibid.,* p. 94.

[31] *Ibid.,* pp. 94-95.

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BOOK REVIEWS

WEN-CHING HO

Thoughts on *Collected Poems by Jean Bodin* (Heinz-Uwe Haus)

This review essay was written mainly to congratulate Dr. Heinz-Uwe Haus on the recent publication of the Chinese version of *Collected Poems by Jean Bodin*. Based on the English version, the Chinese version was first translated by Paul Tseng and then edited by me. Dr. Haus, the author of the collected poems, is also a renowned theatre director and scholar from Germany as well as Cultural Studies expert. For 35 years he served as Professor at the University of Delaware, Newark, in its Theatre Department and Professional Theatre Training Program (PTTP). A cosmopolitan through and through, Dr. Haus has been a guest professor at more than a dozen North American universities and has given over 500 lectures and workshops worldwide. Furthermore, he is Honorary Member of the Cyprus Centre of the International Theatre Institute and Honorary Citizen of the Greek community Katohi. In 1986 he co-founded the International Workshop and Study Centre for Ancient Greek Drama in Oiniades, Greece. From 2004 until 2007 he served as Academic Chair of the Institute for Ancient Greek Drama and Theatre in Cyprus. His experiences as theatre director and professor at home and abroad have some bearings on the clusters of poems he has produced, with the pseudonym of Jean Bodin.

Composed of three clusters of poems, the elegantly-designed book of Chinese rendition will be a welcome introduction to Chinese readers about a slice of German dramaturgical culture in particular and Western culture in general. It is hoped that the following reflections will prove to be of intellectual value to both Occidental and Oriental poetry lovers.

Subtitled "In Memoriam Niki Marangou" the first cluster contains four poems written in May 2013: *Foam-Arisen, Dried Voice, Measure for Measure,* and *In a Moment.* Niki Marangou (1948-2013) was a Greek Cypriot author, poetess, and painter. Written shortly after

Niki's death in February, the first poem in the cluster evokes a feeling of sadness, as implied in the image of "willow," which is often associated with melancholy or weeping. The reference to "jacinth, myrrh, and ivory' – objects that are precious but not easily accessible – brings in elements of sacredness, purity, and beauty. Altogether "Foam Arisen" seems to explore the idea of a cherished memory or experience, which is growing elusive or hard to grasp in its entirety. The persona in "Dried Voice" alludes, as its Chinese version has indicated in the footnote, to the American modernist poet T. S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men." Somehow akin to Eliot's famous poem, *Dried Voices* appears to convey a state of failed communication, and a reflection on loss, solitude amidst the passage of time in human life that was once vibrant but is now fading into nothingness. The very title of *Measure for Measure* brings immediately to mind Shakespeare's noted black comedy. But unlike Shakespeare's play, which mainly condemns moral hypocrisy in the enforcement of law, the poem reflects instead on the paradoxical nature of love in connection with the issues of time, personal will, and freedom. The final sentence, "they could not see to see," recalls the concluding line of *I Heard a Fly Buzz – When I died* by Emily Dickinson, the re-discovered 19th-century American poet: "I could not see to see." The final poem of the cluster, *In a Minute,* meditates on the themes of mortality, fear, and the transience of human existence. The juxtaposition of Aphrodite, the Greek Goddess of love, beauty, and desire, with "a handful of dust" – a biblical allusion to death – seems to emphasize the fragility of life regardless of how powerful and beautiful one is. The concluding line, "there is time," might imply the persona's inner struggle with life, love, and death, just like T. S. Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock.

As actors, duration of time and place are specified under the umbrella title "Decomposition at a Distance on the Record or Sleep's Murderer Black Sun," the second cluster appears to be a play composed of six narrative poems, relatively longer in length. The actions took place between the end of World War II and the fall of Berlin Wall ("Wolftime 8 May 1945 – 9 November 1989"), and "The land around" probably refers to Germany in general and East Germany in particular. The first poem, *No Heart Lives Grandly in Its Silence* reflects on alienation, internal conflict, and the tension

between personal desires and external societal pressures. Rich in biblical and Freudian allusions – "a thorn in his flesh" and "his drives, possession by dark as well as bright passions," the poem implies that individuals are caught between internal drives, societal control, and the oppressive silence that comes with being misunderstood or forced to conform. Similarly, *Dysmoron* also deals with the themes of alienation and the tension between individual desires and state-imposed constraints, especially regarding sexuality, reproduction, and conformity. The very title ("dys" + "moron") hints at the inherent absurdity or foolishness of its subject matter. Indeed, the poem's treatment of reproduction as a state-controlled matter is reminiscent of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* or George Orwell's *1984*, two examples of dystopian literature in which the state, as signified by the term "triumvir" (three-person ruling body of ancient Rome), exerts absolute control over the reproductive capability of individuals. Like the previous two poems in the cluster, *Whoever Disowns You May Not Shoulder and Cuddle Disaster* explores the state's dehumanizing control over sexual relationships regarding procreation ("the procedure of love"), physical compatibility between men and women, and conformity or societal expectations. The reference to ancient Greek warriors and their exercises on the second and third lines of the poem ("in the manner of old Spartans, / during the exercises ...) brings in the elements of physicality and eugenics in connection with reproduction. The remaining three poems continue with the themes of manipulation, control, and regulation of sexual behaviors at the expense of personal autonomy and freedom. For instance, in *"ildly They Are Standing Straightened Up, Among Each Other,* the speaker says, "You will sleep in two separate chambers until the hour of intercourse. Provided that we have found agreement so far.' This might indicate the imposed distribution of roles, in which intimate relationships (that is, sex) are monitored by external authority of technology, like "the astrologer and the physician" who "determine this hour ..." The subsequent reference to Venus, Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars might signify the linkage of the success of human reproduction to cosmic forces. In the 5th poem entitled *Erasure from Above Brouhaha,* phrases or words like "the guards and the teachers, all of them as informants," "the party," "the cadres," and "the party machine" all point to the bureaucratic or totalitarian regime's dehumanizing manipulation and surveillance concerning procreation.

In concluding the poem with a depiction of the female comrades as "beautiful like the 8th of May," the poet uses a simile and an allusion to a significant historic date; that is, the unconditional surrender of Germany and the end of World War II in Europe, perhaps to satirize the state's apparent disregard of natural beauty and human emotions. In line with the themes of control, dehumanization, and power in the preceding poems, *The Established Well Interpreted* seems to be a critical exploration of totalitarian systems that rely heavily on secrecy, surveillance, collective co-operation, and careful management of information.

Entitled *Loreley – Faust Notes,* the third cluster contains seventeen poems, relatively shorter in length. As Heinz-Uwe Haus has succinctly remarked at the end, "These notes tried to determine situations, attitudes, and dramaturgical challenges during the rehearsal process of a recent production of Goethe's *Faust 1* with the Repertory Ensemble Players (Delaware, USA), opening March 8, 2014." Akin to Siren in Greek mythology, the titular "Loreley" refers to a mythic figure in German folklore, who would lure sailors to their doom with her song. The first six- line poem, *All by all,* as the footnote to the Chinese version has pointed out, appropriates the American poet E. E. Cummings's famous *anyone lived in a pretty how town* for its title and last line ("deep by deep"). So, like the German myth of Loreley, the group of poems move from "love's dream kingdom" through endless "Blossoming of love" in the second and third poems *(Hope* and *If love takes hold of her),* emphasizing different aspects of love to the interdependency of love in the fourth poem *Earth Spirit.* Here the central themes – love's profundity, its slow but hopeful evolvement, its demands and challenges, and its reciprocal essence – correspond with the sophisticated relationships in Goethe's *Faust* where Faust's search for meaning and transcendence intertwine with forces of temptation, love, and knowledge. In *Canadian Goose at Easter,* the poet uses the migratory bird's arduous journey north during the spring as a metaphor for human beings' struggle for survival, hinting at a sustained hope for rebirth, as implied in the word "Easter." The following poem *Mephisto's lesson #7* evokes the Faustian conflict between physical, secular temptations ("necessary kissed lips," "Their words flesh-bound") and moral, spiritual considerations ("Judgment without," "Recollections but"). The word "Mephisto," short for Mephistopheles, is associated with the Faust

legend of an ambitious scholar. When Faust makes a deal with the devil at the price of his soul, Mephistopheles acts as the devil's agent.

Perceptible in the following two titular poems are different dimensions of love, devotion, and personal transformation. In *Loreley* the focus is on a highly romantic or idealized love that appears indispensable for the first-person speaker while *Yoga at Loreley* presents the woman as a self- reliant figure, who finds "*sheer delight*" in practicing yoga and does not "*need your* [his] *company or arm*." The following poem *Pact with an Angel* centers on the themes of unyielding marital bond, or eternal love, even in the face of temptation. Despite his pact with Mephistopheles, Faust's love for his wife Gretchen remains unbreakable, as illustrated in the first three lines (Your husband Faust / Can never / Let you go). Indeed, the sixth line ("Overwhelmed every moment") also pinpoints Faust's overwhelming desire for and devotion to "[h]is wife Gretchen," who is "his heaven." As if to act out the themes of the preceding poems, *With You* seems to express such an uncontrollable desire as to perform the intimate relationship in an impulsive manner (Moving / Against all reason). Suggestive in *Are you...* are the themes of emotional detachment despite physical closeness and the long-term communication that appears to certify or answer the titular "Are you**...**" with an existential or philosophical "I am" that concludes the poem. In the five-line *Yes, Mother,* the female speaker appears to be torn between an arranged marriage and personal desire for genuine love elsewhere. The final two lines (If I loved him it / Would be unjust) lays further stress on the loveless union (But without / Hunger and lust), based largely on family duty or societal expectations or both.

The next poem *Hello* delves into the realm of spiritual love that transcends the physical intimacy in secular relationships between men and women. *From the dungeon* seems to explore the themes of suffering, isolation, and emotional endurance as displayed in the first two lines (My skin is flaking / Slowly as I freeze). Here the speaker is lamenting the unfulfilled dreams or desires, or the lost opportunity ("We did not live to reach") of "What life could afford us." The following poem *Echo* conveys a profound sense of loss and emotional turmoil on the voyage, as implied in the opening lines *(My peace is gone* / Washed apart). The title might refer to the well-known mountain nymph (Oread) in Greek mythology, who was sentenced by Hera,

Zeus's wife, to being only able to repeat the last words spoken by others. The last line – "And nevermore" – brings to mind Edgar Allan Poe's famous refrain from *The Raven,* evoking finality and an endless sense of grief and loss, much like the speaker's sorrow. The penultimate poem *Mater Gloriosa* appears to highlight the importance of such divine presence as the Virgin Mother, or the German equivalent of Mater Gloriosa. As its structure demonstrates, the consequence of her presence ("With you beside him ...") contrasts starkly with that of her absence ("Without you ..."). As a symbol of maternal love and grace, Virgin Mary will, the speaker believes, provide him with the much-needed spiritual guidance and substance of love. Evocative in the final poem *Devil-children chattering* is a vivid image of malevolent forces at work and a poignant sense of chaos, temptation, and physical violence permeates a major part of the poem, as suggested in the wording, like "devil-children," "witches," "knife" and "blood." However, the final two lines (Tomorrow there is / A melody to live for) imply a significant hint of hope.

To conclude, penned on different occasions and for specific purposes, the three clusters of poems focus on a great variety of themes while alluding not only to German playwrights and folklores but to Greek mythology and Anglo-American poets. The first cluster, "In Memoriam Niki Marangou," serves as a sincere tribute to a former close friend of the poet's while combining personal memories with universal themes of love, the passage of time, and the inevitability of death. By contrast, the longer narrative poems in the second cluster, as the umbrella title "Decomposition at a Distance on the Record or Sleep's Murderer Black Sun" implies, act out the interweaving themes of power control, bureaucratic manipulation, societal norms, and the body in connection with political and sexual systems. Just like a play in six acts, the poems perform a poignant critique of the societal and political systems that have stripped away individual freedom or autonomy, particularly in matters concerning personal identity, reproduction, and sexual relationships. As displayed in the collective title "Loreley – Faust Notes," the third cluster draws heavily on Goethe's *Faust*, the Loreley myth, along with existential and religious motifs. Altogether, the seventeen poems offer a nuanced treatment of such powerful and timeless themes of love and beauty, temptation, hate, memory, existential struggles, as well as the interplay between the mortal and the divine.

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