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The Paradox of Freedom in the Theodramatic Reflection of Hans Urs von Balthasar against the Background of the Thought of Henri de Lubac and Józef Tischner

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Abstract: The article examines the paradoxicality of the notion of freedom in the theodramatic approach of Hans Urs von Balthasar. The main subject concerns the paradox of finite and infinite freedom and their relationship described in the second volume of *Theo-Drama*. The thought of the Swiss theologian is compared with the reflections of Henri de Lubac and Józef Tischner. The confrontation of their approaches in the context of the chosen topic made it possible to apply a new research method. Instead of the dialectical method, typically used in this context, a method concentrated on identifying the paradox and exploring the mystery behind it has been applied. This approach has led to a deeper understanding of the key role of the dynamical nature of finite freedom and has indicated the importance of proper identification of its source. It has allowed also displaying the inalienable nature of the Christological dimension to understand correctly the concept of infinite freedom and the most important feature of its essence. Finally, it has also helped to gain an in-depth insight into the conditions regarding the possibility of a genuine, though not symmetrical, relationship between the two freedoms.

Keywords: paradox, finite freedom, infinite freedom, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Henri de Lubac, Józef Tischner

The problematics of finite and infinite freedom as well as their relationship has been systematically elaborated by Hans Urs von Balthasar in the second volume of the central part of his *Trilogy*, called *Theo-Drama*.[1] Balthasar himself has admitted that

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[1] The name *Trilogy* refers to the crowning work of Balthasar which is composed of the following three parts: *The Glory of the Lord*, *Theo-Drama*, and *Theo-Logic*, each of which constitutes a separate multi-volume work. The Swiss theologian describes the problematics of finite and infinite freedom and their relation in great detail in the second volume of *Theo-Drama*, see *Theo-Drama*, II, 189–334 (*Theodramatik*, II/1, 170–305). Balthasar's reflection on the issue of freedom, presented there, is often viewed as the key element of his theodramatic thought: "Freedom becomes for Balthasar the most important concept without which it is impossible to understand the mystery of the great drama that God plays in the scene of world history. One deals with a real drama only when actors who face each other are endowed with freedom. There is no theodrama without accepting the fact that apart from God's absolute freedom there is another, admittedly created, but true freedom that has the ability to stand for God as well as against him. God's interaction in man's life is possible only on the assumption that there is an *analogy libertatis*, a correspondence between

the drama which develops between these two freedoms is a topic which constitutes the beginning and the core of his theodramatic reflection:

> The creation of finite freedom by infinite freedom is the starting point of all theodrama. Where finite freedom is seriously taken to be nondivine, there arises a kind of opposition to divine freedom and the appearance, at least, of a limitation of it. […] God sets the limit in order to remove it, so that there may be no barrier between finite freedom and himself.[2]

The aforementioned drama of opposition possesses many faces: from the glorious to the tragic one. However, Balthasar emphasizes, in an exceptional way, yet another aspect of this dramatic reality, namely its paradoxicality:

> But the main thing here is not the tragic aspect but the underlying paradox to which we have already referred: that finite freedom can only exist as participation in infinite freedom, as a result of the latter being immanent in it and transcendent beyond it.[3]

The Swiss theologian has endowed his reflections with a characteristic theodramatic linguistic garment that clearly distinguishes his thought from other authors. It is worth to remember, though, that the topic, which he has explored so perfectly, has been studied before him by other great theologians such as Henri de Lubac, and after him, generations of thinkers have contributed a lot to the subject of the drama of freedom.

Among Polish authors, who have contributed significantly to the field of dramatic reflection, a special attention should be paid to Józef Tischner. Moreover, the reflection of the abovementioned three thinkers have one very significant feature in common, i.e. their exceptional sensitivity to the paradoxical aspect of the subject, which will also become a key aspect of the present analysis.

At this point, it is worth noting that the general problem of the theodramatic relation of finite and infinite freedom has already been thoroughly elaborated in

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created and uncreated freedom" (Budzik, *Dramat odkupienia*, 197–198) (Translation from the Polish is mine).

2   Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 271–272. "Die Erschaffung der endlichen Freiheit durch die unendliche ist der Anfangspunkt aller Theodramatik. Wo endliche Freiheit ernsthaft als nicht-göttlich gesetzt wird, da entsteht so etwas wie eine Opposition und wenigstens der Anschein einer Beschränkung der göttlichen Freiheit. […] Gott setzt die Schranke, um sie zu sich hin zu entschränken" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 246–247). The English citations from *Theodramatik* will be provided in the main body of the article, followed by the original German texts in the notes. The same rule will apply to citations from the works of de Lubac and Tischner.

3   Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 272. "Aber nicht um das Tragische geht es hier vorerst, sondern um das Paradox, das hinter dem besagten Schein steht und von dem schon hinreichend die Rede war: daß endliche Freiheit nur sein kann als Teilnahme an der unendliche, durch ihre Immanenz in dieser und durch deren Transzendenz über ihr" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 247–248).

the available literature, especially in the Christological and soteriological aspects.[4] However, the existing studies do not focus on the aspect of the paradox present in the concept of freedom, which will be the focus of this study and which was strongly emphasized precisely by Balthasar, de Lubac and Tischner.

This common denominator of the reflection of these three thinkers will become the subject of the first part of the article, which will also include a discussion on methodological aspects, in particular, the difference between the paradox-perceiving method, applied in this study, and the usual dialectical method.

The following parts will be devoted to a detailed analysis of the key concepts regarding the subject of freedom in Balthasar's theodramatic thought in confrontation with the theological and anthropological reflections of de Lubac and Tischner.

In particular, the second part will deal with the paradoxicality of the concept of finite freedom and the problematics of its genesis. In the third part, an analogous analysis will be performed regarding the cognitive aspect of the paradox of infinite freedom and the characteristics of its essence. The fourth part will focus on the paradoxicality of the relationship between God's freedom and human freedom. Due to the key nature of the latter topic, it will be divided into three separate sections, focusing respectively on its anthropological, theological and theandric aspects.

1. The Problematics of Paradox in the Thought of Balthasar, de Lubac and Tischner

The abovementioned sensitivity of Balthasar to the problem of paradoxicality has its roots in the fascination with the idea of paradox of French theologian Henri de Lubac, his great master and friend at the same time. It was de Lubac who, as one of the first contemporary thinkers, pointed out, in methodological way, to the issue of paradoxicality in theological reflection in general, and in particular in the relationship between finiteness and infiniteness which will be discussed here.[5]

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4   The Christological aspect has been elaborated by, for instance, in: Pyc, *Chrystus*, 241–263. The soteriological aspect has been studied, for instance, in: Budzik, *Dramat odkupienia*, 190–232. See also: Piotrowski, *Teodramat*, 51–69, 115–148. In addition to these monographic studies, it is worth to consult also general introductory works such as: Guerriero, *Hans Urs von Balthasar*; Nichols, *A Key to Balthasar*.

5   De Lubac's deep reflection on the place and the importance of paradox in theology is contained in two of his works devoted to the subject: Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith* and Lubac, *More Paradoxes*. It is worth noting that Balthasar himself has expressed an opinion that the considerations included in *Paradoxes* reveal the author's true soul: "The «*Paradoxes*», however, have yet another side. They let us into the author's soul; indirectly, perhaps, yet more deeply than other works. They give us a glimpse of his fundamental decision in both personal and intellectual matters" (Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac*, 100).

De Lubac discussed this problem in terms of the relationship between natural and supernatural orders, as well as the relationship between freedom and grace.[6] He noticed the paradoxicality of these relationships in their elusiveness and in the apparent contradiction between the natural and supernatural goals of human life and cognition. He saw this clearly in the theological attempts to systematically formulate the truths of faith:

> For every affirmation of faith is twofold; on our part it necessarily consists in two aims, the two apparent objects of which, at first, seem to oppose, if not to contradict each other; these two aims tend to converge in the infinity to a single object, but the intuition of this uniqueness escapes us.[7]

Moreover, Balthasar's theodramatical reflection has a lot in common—especially as long as the sensitivity to the idea of drama is concerned—with the thought of Tischner, although, for most of his life, the Polish thinker developed his dramatic thought largely independently of his Swiss predecessor.[8] What astonishes, however, is the convergence of basic ideas with the simultaneous diversity of the styles, tools, especially linguistic ones, and methods applied.

Tischner considered the problematics of the relationship between finiteness and infiniteness in a broader context of the relationship between anthropology and theology. He illustrated the problem by referring to the concept of a spiral (in analogy to the hermeneutic spiral), somewhat reminiscent in its nature to the "egg and chicken" paradox:

> The development of thought about the Triune God resembles the image of a spiral. From understanding of human, one passes to understanding of God and from understanding of God, one moves again to understanding of human. However, it is unknown which of these came first.[9]

The more detailed topic of the paradox of finite and infinite freedom was considered by Tischner in the *par excellence* paradoxical context of the so-called dispute

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6 Cf. Lubac, *Petite catéchèse*, 7.
7 "Car toute affirmation de la foi est double; elle consiste nécessairement de notre part en deux visées, dont les deux objets apparents semblent d'abord s'opposer, sinon se contredire; ces deux visées tendent à se rejoindre à l'infini sur un uniqe objet, mais l'intuition de cette unicité nous échappe" (Lubac, *Petite catéchèse*, 53). All the translations from French are mine. Cf. Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 225–226 (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 204).
8 The issue of the independence of Tischner's and Balthasar's works was discussed in: Wołowski, "Problem niezależności," 141–160.
9 "Rozwój myśli o Bogu w Trójcy Jedynym przypomina obraz spirali. Od rozumienia człowieka przechodzi się do rozumienia Boga i od rozumienia Boga do rozumienia człowieka. Aczkolwiek nie wiadomo, co było pierwsze" (Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, 380). All the translations from Polish are mine.

on human existence, to which he devoted his last great work.[10] It can be said that the Cracovian thinker reduced the discussed issue to the question about the existence of human freedom (finite freedom) and, as we shall see, he found the answer in the reality of divine freedom (infinite freedom). This key question concerned the source of freedom in a seemingly completely deterministic world:

> Where does the freedom and the belief that not everything exists in enslavement come from? After all, wherever we look, we discover enslavement almost everywhere. 'The same cause under the same circumstances produces the same effect.' The world is bounded by millions of dependencies. Everything that exists is encircled by the system's web. Now, on the web there appears a human, in case of which the same cause, under the same circumstances, does not want to produce the same results.[11]

He completed the above question with the following ones: "Isn't it a paradox that people are bothered by the idea of freedom? Where does it come from?"[12] It becomes more and more evident now that the ability to perceive the paradoxical nature of the problems discussed is a common feature of the three authors we are dealing with here.

At this point, it is necessary to make an important methodological distinction. The paradox-perceiving method, which emerges from the above considerations, significantly differs from the dialectical method, often used in the context of this type of problems. This difference has not been highlighted strongly enough in the literature.

Especially in the case of the analysis of Balthasar's works, a very common approach—not only to the issue of the relationship between finite and infinite freedom—consists in attributing to him a dialectical approach.[13] Of course, there is no doubt that, for example, Hegel's dialectics, and in particular Hegel's reflection on the relation between finiteness and infinity, must have significantly influenced Balthasar's thought.[14] Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the Swiss theologian

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10   *Spór o istnienie człowieka* [The Controversy over Human Existence].
11   "Skąd bierze się wolność i przekonanie, że nie wszystko istnieje w zniewoleniu? W końcu gdziekolwiek skierujemy spojrzenie, niemal wszędzie okrywamy niewolę. „Ta sama przyczyna w tych samych warunkach przynosi ten sam skutek". Świat jest powiązany milionami zależności. Wszystko, co jest, osacza pajęczyna systemu. Na pajęczynie pojawia się człowiek, w przypadku którego ta sama przyczyna w tych samych warunkach nie chce przynosić tych samych skutków" (Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, 377).
12   "Czy to nie paradoks, że człowieka nawiedza idea wolności? Skąd przychodzi?" (Tischner, *Ksiądz na manowcach*, 95).
13   In the literature one can find many adequate Polish and international studies: Urban, *Hans Urs von Balthasar* (with a bibliography); Dadosky, "The Dialectic of Religious Identity," 46–51; Lüning, "Facing the Crucified," 439–442; Prevot, "Dialectic and Analogy," 261–277.
14   A detailed study regarding the relation between infiniteness and finiteness in Hegel can be found in: Stawrowski, "Związek nieskończoności i skończoności," 47–53.

by no means copied Hegel's approach uncritically. Instead, he often developed his thought in opposition to the German philosopher.[15] Moreover, on many occasions, he distanced himself from the dialectical approach, opting rather for the evangelical model of John's contemplation of paradox:

> The numerous paradoxes of the Johannine theology of experience, which cannot be resolved by rational means, are all the expression, not of a dialectic of concepts, but of a reposing in the (supra-philosophical) contemplation of Being in the beloved Thou, which is at once God and man and which is worthy of all possible believing and adoring love.[16]

As far as the influence on Balthasar's thought is concerned, one should not forget about the role of de Lubac, his long-time master and friend, in whose work and attitude one should look for much deeper layers of Balthasar's inspiration than in Hegel's philosophy. And it is well known that de Lubac spoke even more to the detriment of dialectics in favor of paradox:

> Paradoxes are paradoxical: they make sport of the usual and reasonable rule of not being allowed to be *against* as well as *for*. Yet, unlike dialectics, they do not involve the clever turning of *for* into *against*. Neither are they only a conditioning of the one by the other. They are the simultaneity of the one and the other. They are even something more—lacking which, moreover, they would only be vulgar contradiction. They do not sin against logic, whose laws remain inviolable: but they escape its domain.[17]

The French theologian did not spare quite critical— albeit slightly softened with, typical of him, ironic tone—remarks about dialectics, especially when juxtaposed with paradox, which he used to call its "smiling younger brother":

> Paradox has more charm than dialectics; it is also more realist and more modest, less tense and less hurried; its function is to remind the dialectician when each new stage is reached in the argument, that however necessary this forward movement is no real progress has

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[15] A critical confrontation of the thought of Balthasar with that of Hegel can be found in the following works: Levering, *The Achievement of Hans Urs von Balthasar*; Quash, "Between the Brutely Given," 293–318.

[16] Balthasar, *Glory of the Lord*, I, 227.

[17] Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, 11–12. "Le paradoxe est paradoxe: il se moque de l'exclusion commune et raisonnable du *contre* par le *pour*. Il n'est pourtant pas, comme la dialectique, savant renversement du *pour* au *contre*. Il n'est pas non plus seulement le conditionnement de l'un par l'autre. Il est simultanéité de l'un et de l'autre. Il est même quelque chose de plus, — sans quoi, d'ailleurs, il ne serait que la vulgaire contradiction. Il ne pèche pas contre la logique, dont les lois restent inviolables: mais il échappe à son domaine" (Lubac, *Paradoxes suivi de Nouveaux paradoxes*, 143).

been made. As the scholars of old say, in a rather different sense, of eternal life itself, we are ever going from "beginnings to beginnings."[18]

It is worth, therefore, to attempt a new—from the methodological point of view— approach to the problematics of the relationship between finite and infinite freedom. Based on inspirations taken from de Lubac's works—instead of the usual reference to dialectical patterns—one can apply the method concentrated on perceiving the paradox and exploring the mystery hiding behind it. Thus, in further considerations, the main emphasis will be put on the analysis of the paradoxicality of the key concepts of the drama of freedom described by Balthasar, i.e., finite freedom, infinite freedom and their relation.

2. The Paradox of Finite Freedom

The problematics of the paradox of finite freedom has been considered—even before Balthasar—by de Lubac, so it will be appropriate to start with the analysis of his thought. Naturally, in his approach, the French theologian does not use all these Balthasar-specific terms and expressions. He speaks simply of the paradox of human existence as a creature stretched between two extremely distant worlds—the animal world and the spiritual world:

> Human nature is complex. A human is both an animal and a spirit. Although he lives on earth, engaged in earthly fate, he has at the same time something that transcends all earthly horizons and looks for breath in eternity. This first fact makes us aware that an internal struggle takes place in a human being.[19]

It is precisely this tension between earthly and heavenly horizons that constitutes the source of paradoxicality of the human nature and causes this state of constant internal struggle. Its consequences are unavoidably faced by all humans in their everyday lives. Nonetheless, equipped with the grace of faith, they are capable of crossing their seemingly inexorable natural limitations resulting from the cold laws of logic,

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[18] Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, 9–10. "Frère souriant de la dialectique, plus réalilste et plus modeste, moins tendu, moins pressé, il rappelle toujours à sa grande soeur, en reparaissant à ses côtés pour chaque étape nouvelle, que, malgré le nécessaire mouvement qu'elle se donne, elle n'a pas réellement avancé. Comme le disent d'anciens docteurs, en un sens un peu différent, de la vie éternelle elle-même, nous allons toujours de «commencements en commencements»" (Lubac, *Paradoxes suivi de Nouveaux paradoxes*, 71).

[19] "La nature de l'homme est double. Il est animal, et il est espirit. Vivant sur terre, engagé dans un destin temporel, quelque chose est en lui qui déborde tout horizon terrestre et cherche sa respiration dans l'éternel. Déjà ce premier fait nous montre la lutte installée dans l'homme" (Lubac, *Méditation sur l'Église*, 143).

biology and physics. They are capable of entering the area of "impossible," and this, paradoxically, constitutes the essence of their vocation:

> Life, in every realm, is the triumph of the improbable—of the impossible. So much the same for living faith. It moves mountains; it breaks open vicious circles. It gets its food from poisons and proceeds by dint of obstacles.[20]

Another aspect of the paradoxicality of human nature, signaled by de Lubac, is the problem of the relationship between individuals and society or, as the author himself prefers, men and humanity, which in a paradoxical way condition each other: "If there be no man without humanity, much less still is there any Humanity without men."[21]

The issue touched upon in this enigmatic statement will be taken up and developed by Balthasar in a systematic and very profound way. At the same time, the Swiss theologian will redirect the focus of his analysis to the aspect of freedom. For this purpose, he introduces a specific terminology in which creation, and in particular a human being, is called *finite freedom*.[22]

In the problem formulated above by de Lubac, Balthasar sees a special case of the fundamental and deeply paradoxical, but general law of being:

> All living beings (at least from the higher animals upward, including man) exhibit a puzzling fact: they share in a specific nature that is identical in all individuals, but they do so in a way that, in each instance, is unique and incommunicable. The individual is "for itself"; this is part of the distinctness of its species (and, over and above it, of the genus *animal*). It is not something that is eliminated either by communication between individuals or by the herd instinct or by the ability to multiply. Thus the concept of "species" cannot abstract from this incommunicable "each for itself" that characterizes the individuals in whom the species is embodied, even if the number and diversity of these individuals cannot be deduced on the basis of the species.[23]

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20   Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, 28; "La vie, en tout ordre, est le triomphe de l'improbable, – de l'impossible. Ainsi de la foi vivante. Elle transporte les montagnes, – elle rompt les cercles vicieux. Elle tire son aliment des poisons, et progresse à force d'obstacles" (Lubac, *Paradoxes suivi de Nouveaux paradoxes*, 18).

21   Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, 131. "S'il n'y a pas d'homme sans humanité, bien moins encore y a-t-il d'Humanité sans hommes" (Lubac, *Paradoxes suivi de Nouveaux paradoxes*, 121).

22   It is worth noting that in Balthasar's approach the term *finite freedom* (*endliche Freiheit*) possesses two meanings: 1) the attribute of freedom with which a given being is endowed and has it at its disposal; 2) the subject possessing this attribute, i.e. this very being. In this study, the term will also be used in both of these meanings.

23   Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, III, 203–204. "Alle lebenden Wesen (wenigstens von den höheren Tieren an – bis zum Menschen einschließlich) zeigen die rätselhafte Eigentümlichkeit, daß sie an einer in alle Individuen identischen Artnatur teilhaben, diese aber immer in einer je einmaligen und unmittelbaren Weise besitzen. Das Für-sich-Sein des Individuums gehört zur Eigentümlichkeit seiner Art (und darüber hinaus der Gattung *animal*), es wird weder durch die Kommunikation zwischen den Individuen, noch durch ihren

The Swiss theologian speaks of a paradox of inclusion of the individual into its species with its simultaneous exclusion from this species. What includes an individual in the species (individuals' features determine the features of the species), at the same time excludes it from the species (individuals' unique features distinguish them within their species).[24]

Balthasar comes to the conclusion that the paradoxical condition of a human being stretched between extremes is a consequence of a much deeper, ontological paradox that is shared by every finite being that interacts in the communicable-in-communicable way with its environment. He calls it the *fundamental paradox*:

> We are concentrating on the fundamental paradox that both things are unveiled in my own presence-to myself: namely, the absolute incommunicability of my own being (as "I") and the unlimited communicability of being as such (which is not "used up" by the fullness of all the worldly existence in which it subsists).[25]

One can speak here of a specific bipolarity of finite beings, whose existence is stretched between the inner, intimate "I" of a given individual and the overall social "we" of the population and the environment in which it lives.

Only on the basis of the above general-philosophical reflection, one can move on to the theological aspects of the analysis of the specific concept of finite freedom, in the sense in which it is understood by Balthasar. In the light of the above considerations, it will come as no surprise that what will draw Balthasar's attention is precisely the paradoxical nature of this concept:

> The concept of finite freedom seems self-contradictory, for how can something that is continually coming up against the limits of its nature (not only of its action) be free? How

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Herdentrieb, noch durch ihre Fähigkeit zur Vermehrung aufgehoben. Der Artbegriff kann also von diesem inkommunikablen «Je-für-sich» der die Art verwirklichenden Individuen nicht abstrahieren, auch wenn deren Zahl end Einzelmarkmale aus der Art nicht deduzierbar sind" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/2, 186–187).

24 The official English translation (cf. Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, III, 204) fails to reflect faithfully Balthasar's original thought regarding this matter, thus in this particular case we refer the reader directly to the original text: "Das überall gleicherweise vorhandene Paradox dieses Ein- und Ausschlusses wird in der Redensart von der «Je-Meinigkeit» des Besitzes des Artwesens deutlich: das «Je» gehört zu allen Wesen der Art, kennzeichnet also diese letztere, während es gleichzeitig Einmaligkeit und Unmittelbarkeit der Individualität anzeigt" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/2, 187).

25 Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 208. "Sondern nur das grundlegende Paradox, daß sich in der Selbstgegenwart beides gemeinsam enthüllt: die absolute Unmittelbarkeit meines Ichseins und die unbegrenzte Mitteilbarkeit de Seins als solchen (das durch die Fülle alles weltlichen Seienden, worin es subsistiert, nicht «aufgebraucht» wird)" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 188).

can it be anything but a prisoner? Nonetheless our direct experience of freedom cannot be expressed in any other way but in this apparent contradiction.[26]

It is worth emphasizing that we are in fact dealing here with a paradox and not with a strict contradiction. For that reason, Balthasar emphasizes that the "contradiction" is only apparent. The precise formulation of this paradox is the following: how is it possible that something limited and totally imprisoned in finiteness can at the same time be genuinely free?

In order to find a way out of this apparent trap, Balthasar juxtaposes the above paradox with the earlier discussed paradox of the simultaneous communicability and incommunicability of an individual within its species or more general with its environment:

The one, identical experience of being discloses two things simultaneously: the utter incommunicability (or uniqueness) and the equally total communicability of being. As an "I", as a person, I am not merely a part of a whole (the cosmos, for instance) but am ready to acknowledge that an unlimited number of others possess being (and the incommunicability that goes along with it).[27]

The way out will be found by realizing that finite freedom possesses this extraordinary ability to dynamically open up itself toward the above-mentioned others. In order to see this, one must first admit that in the case of the complete closure (complete incommunicability) of an individual in a static configuration of its internal and external limitations, it would be impossible to talk about any kind of genuinely conceived freedom.

However, the element of communicability, i.e. the openness to dynamic interaction with other individuals and with the entire environment, causes these limitations to become subject of change over time. What limits the individual today, as a seemingly insurmountable barrier, tomorrow may prove to be an obstacle which can be overcome. What blocks the freedom of an individual at a given stage of its development, can be fought down in the next stage. Moreover, as de Lubac suggested

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26 Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 207. "Der Begriff endlicher Freiheit scheint in sich widersprüchlich, denn wie kann ein an seine Wesens- (nicht nur Handlungs-) grenzen Stoßendes nicht gefangen, sondern frei sein? Trotzdem läßt sich unsere unmittelbare Freiheitserfahrung nicht anders als innerhalb dieses Scheinwiderspruchs ausdrücken" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 186).

27 Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 209. "Die eine, identische Seins-erfahrung enthüllt gleichzeitig beides: die restlose Inkommunikabilität (bzw. Einmaligkeit) und die ebenso restlose Kommunikabilität des Seins. Als Ich-Person bin ich kein bloßer Teil eines Ganzen (etwa des Kosmos), bin aber bereit, unbegrenzt vielen Anderen das Auch-Sein (mit der entsprechenden Inkommunikabilität) zuzubilligen" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 188).

above, the piling up obstacles—paradoxically—may serve to some as motivation to conquer them.

In other words, finiteness and limitation would contradict the freedom of an individual only if the limits set by them were to be absolute and insurmountable. The possibility of gradual, dynamic overcoming or at least pushing the limits means that the individual has, an admittedly incomplete, but a genuine freedom. In this approach, finite freedom is always on the way from a current state of its limitation to an ever more complete state of freedom in the future:

> For if, in the face of all objections, we still have an irrefutable awareness of our freedom, we are equally aware that our freedom is not unlimited, or more precisely that, while we are free, we are always only moving *toward* freedom.[28]

The above considerations will not be complete, however, if the basic objection raised by Tischner is not taken into account. Namely, under the assumption that we have some initial—even partial and very limited—freedom, one can agree with Balthasar that its authenticity will be guaranteed as long as we are able to develop it. But Tischner takes one step back and asks how we know that we have some kind of initial freedom at our disposal:

> Where does the idea of freedom come from in our world? Where does this very word come from? Who and when came up with the idea of freedom? And is it even possible that someone from this earth invented it on this earth?[29]

In a more precise way, the thinker from Kraków reformulates this question—underlining at the same time its paradoxical character—in another work written shortly before his death:

> Have we not wondered where the freedom came from in this world? In fact, the earth could be fine without it. There is no freedom among stones, waters, rain and hail, earthquakes and windstorms. There is no freedom in the beautiful world of butterflies and in fearful snake nests. How about man? Isn't it a paradox that people are bothered by the idea of

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28 Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 207. "Denn wenn wir, allen Einwänden zum Trotz, ein unwiderliches Bewußtsein unserer Freiheit haben, so ein ebenso gewisses davon, daß unsere Freiheit nicht unbeschränkt ist, genauerhin: daß wir als Freie zu unserer Freiheit immer erst unterwegs sind" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 186).

29 "Skąd w naszym świecie idea wolności? Skąd to słowo? Kto i kiedy wpadł na pomysł wolności? I czy to w ogóle możliwe, by na tej ziemi wymyślił ją ktoś z tej ziemi?" (Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, 377).

freedom? Where does it come from? Some fight for freedom, others flee from it, but freedom remains a problem. Can the freedom in this world be of this world?[30]

Interestingly enough, Tischner realizes that the correct path toward the answer will pass through seemingly distant considerations regarding the immanent relations within the Holy Trinity. He explores the problem by reaching out, among other authors, to Balthasar's works:

Urs von Balthasar writes about it in an excellent way, although he is not the only one. Freedom turns out to be God's inner dimension. It is not about the fact that God is free in relation to creatures, because how could it be otherwise? The point is that God is "free within": the Father toward Son, the Son toward the Father, the Spirit in relation to the Father and to the Son, the Father and the Son in relation to the Spirit.[31]

From this observation Tischner draws a fundamental conclusion about the genesis of finite freedom. Namely, we can speak of an authentic "leaven" of freedom in a human being despite this apparent deterministic environmental setup which surrounds it. Even if nowhere else one can speak of freedom, in man, created in the image and likeness of God, who is authentically and infinitely free, the image of this freedom — even if partial and far from complete — must also be authentic:

This discovery sheds light on our earthly affairs. […] Because if God is free, everything changes. Created in the image and the likeness of God, man must carry within himself this wind that blows within the Holy Trinity.[32]

And even if, after the first fall, that image was seriously distorted, causing this freedom to become subject of the bonds of sin, de Lubac reminds us that in Christ it has been set free anew and even more strongly implanted in human spirituality:

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[30] "Czy nie zastanawialiśmy się czasem, skąd na ziemi wzięła się wolność? Właściwie ziemia mogłaby się bez niej obejść. Nie ma wolności w wśród kamieni, wód, deszczów i gradów, trzęsień ziemi i wichrów. Nie ma wolności w pięknym świecie motyli w groźnych gniazdach węży. A u człowieka? Czy to nie paradoks, że człowieka nawiedza idea wolności? Skąd przychodzi? Jedni bija się o wolność, drudzy uciekają od wolności, ale wolność wciąż jest problemem. Czy wolność na tym świecie może być z tego świata?" (Tischner, *Ksiądz na manowcach*, 95).

[31] "Znakomicie pisze o tym Urs von Balthasar, choć nie on jedyny. Wolność okazuje się wewnętrznym wymiarem Boga. Nie o to chodzi, że Bóg jest wolny w stosunku do stworzeń, bo jak mogłoby być inaczej? Chodzi o to, że Bóg jest «wewnętrznie wolny»: Ojciec wobec Syna, Syn wobec Ojca, Duch w stosunku do Ojca i Syna, Ojciec i Syn w stosunku do Ducha" (Tischner, *Ksiądz na manowcach*, 95).

[32] "Odkrycie to rzuca snop światła na nasze ziemskie sprawy. […] Jeśli jednak Bóg jest wewnętrznie wolny, to wszystko ulega zmianie. Stworzony na obraz i podobieństwo Boga człowiek musi nieść w sobie ten wiatr, który wieje we wnętrzu Trójcy Świętej" (Tischner, *Ksiądz na manowcach*, 95).

Without a doubt one can advance to say that already by the very fact of having revealed to the man that he was made for a higher world, for a place "where Justice dwells," Jesus put in him a principle of spiritual freedom, a fruit of an inner demand stronger than all tyrants.[33]

The subject of finite freedom turns, this way, gradually into that of the infinite one.

3. The Paradox of Infinite Freedom

This time, it is worth to begin with Balthasar. The concept of *infinite freedom*,[34] in his understanding, is also not free from the element of paradoxicality. The difference consists only in its nature.

In the case of finite freedom, one had to deal with the apparent internal contradiction of this concept. This type of problem will not be encountered in the analysis of the concept of infinite freedom. The problem, however, lies in our, i.e. human, ability to perceive and describe this elusive reality.

The theologian from Basel wonders how finite freedom, i.e. a being struggling with such drastic limitations and equipped with very limited cognitive means, but still aware of God's interference in the history of the world, can gain any insight into the mystery of infinite freedom:

> The influences unleashed upon world history as a result of the intervention of infinite freedom are irreversible. Since the making of the biblical Covenant, however, the truth of the world and of man is indissolubly bound up with the truthfulness of God (who looks for a similar response from man). It is now impossible to produce a raison d'être for the world without going through this narrow gate. But can anything be said about *infinite freedom in itself*?[35]

Father de Lubac, in his turn, looks from two different angles at this paradox of trying to know the unknowable and notices two possible dangers associated with

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[33] "Sans doute on peut bien avancer que déjà, par le seul fait d'avoir révélé à l'homme qu'il était fait pour un monde supérieur, pour une terre «où la Justice habite», Jésus a mis en lui un principe de liberté spirituelle, fruit d'une exigence intérieure plus forte que tous les tyrans" (Lubac, *Méditation sur l'Église*, 145).

[34] Similarly to the previous case, the term *infinite freedom* (*unendliche Freiheit*) can as well be understood in a twofold way: it can mean the freedom which is at God's disposal, but it can also mean God himself.

[35] Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 255–256. "Die aufgezeigten weltgeschichtlichen Wirkungen des Einbruchs unendlicher Freiheit sind unumkehrbar. Seit dem biblischen Bundesschluß aber ist die Wahrheit de Welt und des Menschen unlöslich mit der Wahrhaftigkeit Gottes (der eine ebensolche Antwort vom Menschen erwartet) verbunden: keine Begründung des Sinnes von Welt ist mehr möglich außer durch diese enge Pforte hindurch. Aber läßt sich etwas aussagen über *die unendliche Freiheit in sich selbst*?" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 231).

them. The first concerns the risk of disregarding the enormity of the mystery and reducing it to flat human imaginations (heresies). The second regards the temptation of abandoning the seemingly impossible task:

> We do not want a mysterious God. Neither do we want a God who is Some One. Nothing is more feared than this mystery of the God who is Some One. We would rather not be some one ourselves, than meet that Some One![36]

In the case of the first danger, i.e. the possibility of falling into heresy, de Lubac draws attention to the paradox of the theological "insensitivity" characteristic of contemporary Christians. Unlike ancient Christians, who formally had much less theological sophistication and knowledge than we do, the heresies that flourish today seem to be either unnoticed or even openly endorsed by us—something simply unthinkable in early Christianity. In order to dispel any doubts, the French theologian emphasizes that it is not about a higher culture of dialogue or a possible sense of mercy toward adversaries:

> If heretics no longer horrify us today, as they once did our forefathers, is it certain that it is because there is more charity in our hearts? Or would it not too often be, perhaps, without our daring to say so, because the bone of contention, that is to say, the very substance of our faith, no longer interests us? Men of too familiar and too passive a faith, perhaps for us dogmas are no longer the Mystery on which we live, the Mystery which is to be accomplished in us. Consequently, then, heresy no longer shocks us; at least, it no longer convulses us like something trying to tear the soul of our souls away from us.… And that is why we have no trouble in being kind to heretics, and no repugnance in rubbing shoulders with them.[37]

That is why, undertaking a serious reflection on the paradox of infinite freedom, Balthasar reaches back to the aforementioned "forefathers," but not only within

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36   Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, 214. "On ne veut pas d'un Dieu mystérieux. – On ne veut pas non plus d'un Dieu qui soit Quelqu'un. – On ne redoute rien tant que ce mystère du Dieu qui est Quelqu'un. Plutôt nêtre pas soi-même quelqu'un, que de rencontrer ce Quelqu'un!" (Lubac, *Paradoxes suivi de Nouveaux paradoxes*, 170).

37   Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, 226. "Si l'hérétique ne nous fait plus horreur aujourd'hui comme il faisait horreur à nos ancêtres, est-ce à coup sûr parce que nous avons au coeur plus de charité? Ou ne serait-ce pas peut-être trop souvent, sans que nous osions nous le dire, parce que l'objet du litige, à savoir la substance même de notre foi, ne nous intéresse plus? Hommes de foi trop habituée et trop passive, peut-être les dogmes ne sont-ils plus pour nous le Mystère dont nous vivions, le Mystère qui doit s'accompilr en nous. Alors, en conséquence, l'hérésie ne nois choque plus; du moins ne nous bouleverse-t-elle plus comme ce qui tenterait de nous arracher l'âme de notre âme... Et c'est pourquoi nous n'avons pas de peine à être bons pour l'hérétique, ni de répungance à frayer avec lui" (Lubac, *Paradoxes suivi de Nouveaux paradoxes*, 181).

Christian domain, as he also refers to the ancient extra-biblical reflection. The Swiss theologian points out two competing and seemingly irreconcilable aspects distinguished by this ancient thought:

> In the extra-biblical world, two views struggle for dominance, unable to find common ground for understanding. On the one hand, there is a personal freedom that is ascribed to God but (even in the case of Zeus) remains anthropomorphic and limited, however much it may be refined. On the other hand, there is a superpersonal freedom, applied to the idea of the Good that is elevated above all finite being; lacking all envy, it can pour itself out and enable those who seek it to participate in its freedom from all entanglement. But it is not the latter that decides the ethical value of the individual life (like Plato's mythical judge of the dead).[38]

Thus, the ancients encountered in their attempt to grasp the essence of infinite freedom an insurmountable dichotomy: either God possesses personal freedom, but at the expense of compromising and incriminating him anthropomorphisms, or he is an absolute idea of freedom, but then completely detached from the drama of this world.

The Swiss theologian emphasizes, however, that also in this case the dichotomy is in fact only apparent. Nevertheless, it is true that the solution to this dilemma lies far beyond the capacity of purely philosophical human endeavor. The possibility of overcoming this dichotomy came only with the fullness of Christian Revelation:

> Infinite freedom, in the sense of personal command of oneself, dawns only in the New Testament. It is anticipated in many ways, both in philosophy and in the Old Testament, but the fragments of meaning do not form a whole.[39]

Perceptible access to the mystery of the full unification of the abovementioned aspects—i.e. the individual and universal dimension of infinite freedom—humanity obtains only in the person of incarnated absoluteness, i.e. in the divine-human mystery of the incarnation of Christ:

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[38] Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 243. "In der außer biblischen Welt kämpfen zwei Sichten um die Vormacht, ohne zueinander zu finden: eine personale Freiheit, die dem Gott zugeschrieben wird, aber (sogar bei Zeus) trotz aller Überhöhung anthropomorph begrenzt bleibt, und eine überpersonale Freiheit, die der über alle endliche Sein erhabenen Idee des Guten zukommt; sie kann sich neidlos verströmen und den ihr Nachstrebenden Anteil geben an ihrem Ledigsein von aller Verstrickung aber nicht sie ist es, die (wie die mythischen Totenrichter Platons) über den sittlichen Wert der Einzelleben entscheidet" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 220).

[39] Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 243. "Unendliche Freiheit im Sinne personalem Verfügens hat ihren Aufgang erst im Neuen Testament. Vieles bereitet sie vor, sowohl in der Philosophie wie im Alten Testament, aber die Sinnfragmente schließen sich nicht zum Ganzen" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 220).

This barrier, this lack of reciprocity, is broken down in Jesus Christ, who "penetrates all things" in quite a different way from the wisdom of "Solomon". In his being "made to be sin" and bearing the "curse", infinite freedom shows its ultimate, most extreme capability for the first time: it can be itself even in the finitude that "loses itself"—a capability which neither Jews nor Greeks could have imagined. For them it remains a stumbling block and foolishness.[40]

The fact that the only key allowing us to penetrate the mystery of God's freedom is Christ himself, who, on one hand, permeates everything and on the other, unifies divinity and humanity in his unique person was also emphasized by Tischner, who, commenting on Balthasar's reflections, wrote:

The "classic place" in which the encounter between finite and infinite freedom is accomplished is the figure of Jesus Christ. The meeting and mutual penetration of divinity and humanity, fulfilled in Christ, is the culmination of the history of salvation.[41]

We will return to the subject of the encounter between both freedoms in the next part of the article. At this moment, we will focus on the Christological cognitive aspect. Tischner approaches this particular topic from the axiological point of view, which is characteristic of his attitude in general. According to the Polish thinker, the key cognitive element is the act of assertion, understood as the recognition of the value that Christ represents and exhibits in his life and behavior:

The entirety of Revelation is permeated with the fundamental radiation of the assertory act of Jesus, who sees the Father, knows man and testifies through himself that he is not lying. The Christian faith follows this radiance closely. Jesus is the center—he constitutes its content and its argument.[42]

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40   Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 244. "Die Schranke der fehlenden Reziprozität wird in Jesus Christus überwunden, der ganz anders als die «salomonische» Weisheit «alle durchdringt»: Indem er «zur Sünde gemacht wird» und den «Fluch» trägt, erwiest die unendliche Freiheit erst ihre äußerste Möglichkeit: auch in der sich-verlierenden Endlichkeit sie selbst zu sein: eine Möglichkeit, an die weder Juden noch Griechen denken konnten: für sie bleibt sie ein Ärgernis und eine Torheit" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 221). A systematic study of Balthasar's vision of the Christological key to the knowledge of infinite freedom can be found in: Pyc, *Chrystus*, 241–263. A breakthrough role of Christ with respect to the pre-Christian cognitive efforts is described there in terms of the opposition between the negative and positive *elusiveness*: "However, when God, whom no one has ever seen, is «revealed» (Jn 1:18) by his Son in human words and deeds, the negative elusiveness turns into a positive one," cf. Pyc, *Chrystus*, 244.

41   "«Miejscem klasycznym», w którym dopełnia się spotkanie wolności skończonej i Nieskończonej, jest postać Jezusa Chrystusa. Spełnione w Chrystusie spotkanie i wzajemne przenikanie bóstwa i człowieczeństwa stanowi szczytowy punkt dziejów zbawienia" (Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, 387).

42   "Całość Objawienia jest przeniknięta fundamentalnym promieniowaniem asertorycznego aktu Jezusa, który widzi Ojca, zna człowieka i świadczy sobą, że nie kłamie. Wiara chrześcijańska idzie ściśle po linii

From our present research perspective, the most important aspect of the above observation regards the access to the mystery of the Father, in particular, to the mystery of his infinite freedom, through Christ, who is the only one who "sees the Father." But not only, he also "testifies through himself" in such a way that "knowing man" he knows how to present this testimony in an accessible and understandable way.

Balthasar and Tischner agree, therefore, that the paradox of trying to know the unknowable is largely resolved in Christ. Certainly, this does not mean that this paradox has been completely overcome. The same pertains to the possibility of exhausting the mystery behind it. Mindful of de Lubac's warnings in this regard, Balthasar strongly emphasizes that mankind will never be able to fully explore this mystery: "God is the ground [*Ungrund*: "groundless ground"] of all freedom, but while he can be known as such by some other knower […], his proportions can never be grasped, for that same reason."[43]

Nevertheless, thanks to the acquisition of the Christological key, which allows us to penetrate the problem of infinite freedom, we are able to dig quite deeply into this mystery, getting access to a deeper layer of the discussed paradox. Balthasar describes it as follows: "in God's self-proclamation in Jesus Christ the more blessed mystery is revealed, namely, that love—self-surrender—is part of this bliss of absolute freedom."[44]

The total and, above all, voluntary surrender of Christ both to the Father ("into your hands," Luke 23:46) and to humanity ("he loved them to the end," John 13:1) indicates the deepest aspect of freedom, which has already been archetypically realized by the Father in the intra-Trinitarian act of giving himself to his only begotten Son.

The key point here is the observation that intra-Trinitarian freedom does not consist only in possessing infinite possibility and range of choice or unlimited power over everything and everyone. A much deeper characterization of infinite freedom regards the possibility of infinite and unlimited self-giving to another, in an absolute and complete way, i.e. not only in some external manifestations of one's existence, but in the entirety of one's essence:

> God is not only by nature free in his self-possession, in his ability to do what he will with himself; for that very reason, he is also free to do what he will with his own nature. That is,

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tego promieniowania. Jezus jest centrum – jej treścią i jej argumentem" (Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, 232).

43 Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, V, 406. "Gott ist der Ungrund alle Freiheit, der zwar […] von einem andern Erkennenden wohl als solcher erkannt, aber eben deshalb nie ausgemessen werden kann" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, IV, 372). This thought has been paraphrased in an interesting way by Pyc who pointed out to a paradox concealed in it: "Despite the fact that certain contents are revealed in the most precise way, they turn out to be all the more elusive" (cf. Pyc, *Chrystus*, 244).

44 Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 256. "[I]n der Selbstkundgabe Gottes in Jesus Christus enthüllt sich das seligere Mysterium, daß zu dieser Seligkeit der absoluten Freiheit die Liebe als Selbsthingabe gehört" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 232–233).

he can surrender himself; as Father, he can share his Godhead with the Son, and, as Father and Son, he can share the same Godhead with the Spirit.[45]

The paradox lies here in the fact that in common understanding, total self-giving and sacrifice for another, without reserving absolutely anything for oneself, is usually interpreted as a sign of weakness, submission and dependence, but not freedom. The latter, in human terms, is more often associated with the attitude of rebellion, with the quest for independence and the tendency to secure and exercise one's autonomy.

To the contrary, as Balthasar emphasizes, within the Holy Trinity the maximum of freedom is achieved in the absolute and unreserved mutual self-giving and surrender of Persons. First, eternally, i.e. immanently, the Father gives himself to the Son through the paradox of complete surrender of his Godhead without any loss of it on his part. Then, economically the Son gives himself up through the act of redemption, which is through the paradox of incarnation and the paradox of the cross.[46]

Another paradox, that looms now on the horizon, is the fact that human beings are also invited to participate in this divine reciprocity.

4. The Paradox of the Relation between Finite and Infinite Freedom

In the context of the paradox of infinite freedom, discussed above and considered from the Christological perspective, the events of the incarnation and the cross constituted an important factor in deepening our understanding of this concept. Approaching the problem of the relationship between infinite and finite freedom, de Lubac extends this perspective by considering two other key aspects, i.e. the events of the resurrection and ascension:

> But, as we are terribly and almost incurably carnal, the very resurrection of the Savior risked being misinterpreted by us. Accordingly, the resurrection is succeeded by the ascension, to show us what it meant and to force us finally to turn our eyes upward, to go beyond the earthly horizon and all that pertains to man in his natural state. Thus the lesson

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45   Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 256. "Gott ist nicht nur wesenhaft frei in seinem Selbstbesitz, seiner Selbstverfügung: er ist gerade deshalb auch frei, über sein Wesen im Sinne einer Selbsthingabe zu verfügen: als Vater die Gottheit dem Sohn mitzuteilen, als Vater und Sohn dieselbe Gottheit mit dem Geist zu teilen" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 232).

46   The paradoxical character of infinite freedom constitutes one of the main examples of Balthasar's perceived need to transcend the rigid frames of dialectics. This fact has been emphasized by Pyc: "Our author [Balthasar] is aware that here we are outside the dialectics of contingency and necessity. The absolute freedom to possess oneself should be understood, with respect to the essence of God, as a gift without limits. It is not determined by anything else than itself, but determined in such a way that without the continual gift of self it would not be itself" (Pyc, *Chrystus*, 242).

of the ascension does not contradict the lesson of the incarnation: it prolongates it, deepens it. It does not set us beneath or apart from life; it obliges us to assume it fully while aiming beyond.[47]

"Almost incurable"—as de Lubac says—human carnality seems to be in total opposition to the other pole of human existence, i.e. its vocation to live in intimacy with God.

The basic question here is the following: how can something finite enter into a non-trivial relationship with something truly infinite and not fall into the proverbial absurdity of an ant trying to establish a relationship with an elephant? The abovementioned vocation of finite freedom to "look above and beyond" and to try to establish a relationship with infinite freedom seems not only paradoxical, but simply impossible, once we realize how glaring are the disproportions.

Reflecting on this issue, Balthasar reformulates the above question and asks how both these freedoms must behave in order to establish an authentic relationship despite all the adversities. These behaviors will be considered separately in the following three sections.

4.1. The Paradox of Poverty and Wealth in Opening up to Others

The earlier discussed fact of involvement of finite freedom in the paradox of simultaneous inclusion-exclusion or equivalently communicability-incommunicability became the basis for Balthasar's assertion regarding the bipolar structure of finite freedom.

According to this assertion, finite freedom is stretched between two poles. The first one receives the name of *self-possession* and represents everything which concerns the inner autonomy of the individual (*autexousion*). The other pole regards the ability to enter into relationships with others and with the environment and is usually called by Balthasar the *universal opening*:

Present to ourselves in the light of being, we possess an inalienable core of freedom that cannot be split open. […] However, this primal, secure self-possession is not a self-intuition or grasp of one's essence; it articulates itself only *in and with* the universal opening to all being, leaving itself behind to embrace the knowledge and will of others and other

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47 Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, 68–69. "Mais, comme nous sommes terriblement et presque incurablement charnels, la résurrection même du Sauveur risquait d'être par nous mal comprise. A la résurrection succède donc l'ascension, destinée à nous en montrer le sens et à nous forcer enfin à porter nos regards en haut, à dépasser l'horizon terrestre et tout ce qui est de l'homme en son état naturel. Ainsi, la leçon de l'ascension ne contredit pas la leçon de l'incarnation: elle la prolonge, elle l'approfindit. Elle ne nous place pas en deçà ou à côté de la vie humaine: elle nous oblige à l'accomplir en nous faisant viser au-delà" (Lubac, *Paradoxes suivi de Nouveaux paradoxes*, 45).

things, particularly in shared being [*Mitsein*], whereby the original opening is always so great that no individual being (which is never the whole of being) can fill it.[48]

It is precisely this structure that underlined Balthasar's solution of the paradox of finite freedom, which was discussed earlier in the paper. All the limitations of finite freedom, represented by and inscribed in its first pole, can be exceeded over time thanks to the dynamic and interactive element associated with the second pole.

Thanks to this structure, finite freedom is always on the way to some greater and wider freedom. Balthasar adds that this journey never ends in this world—regardless of the height of the level of freedom one can achieve in given earthly conditions, there is always much more out there to pursue. The ultimate goal of this path can only be fulfilled in the reunion with infinite freedom:

> The first pole of finite freedom, the "*autexousion*", is posited unrestrictedly as the prime datum; only in the second step is it demonstrated that freedom, thus given, must also realize itself, within the overall context of divine freedom, in a process that, on earth, is never-ending.[49]

In the first step of this process, the second pole is responsible for reaching out to other finite freedoms. This way, an equal dialogue begins and the freedoms involved in it become the subjects of gradual and mutual development. At this stage, the paradox of the aforementioned disproportion has not shown up yet. However, Balthasar perceives another paradox which has already emerged at this early stage, the understanding of which is crucial in order to pass consciously to more advanced stages. This intermediate paradox is meant to prepare finite freedom to overcome the "incurability" of its carnality and to rise to a higher degree of openness, allowing it to entrust itself no longer to another human, but this time to God himself.

The paradox in question concerns the amazing feeling of simultaneous poverty and wealth experienced in the process of opening up to others. On one hand, the very need to turn toward "the other" reveals the awareness of one's own insufficiency and the feeling that something is lacking. On the other hand, the same turning is the only

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[48] Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 210–211. "Im Sichgegenwärtigsein im Licht des Seins überhaupt liegt ein nicht aufzubrechender Kern von Freiheit als unentwendbarer Selbstbesitz. […] Der ursprüngliche und sichere Selbstbesitz ist aber keine Selbstintuition oder Wesenserfassung, sie artikuliert sich nur *mit* der universalen Öffnung zu allem Seienden, im Ausgang aus sich selbst zum Erkennen und Wollen von anderem, insbesondere im Mitsein, wobei dich die ursprüngliche Öffnung stets so groß ist, daß kein Seiendes (das nie das ganze Sein ist) sie auszufüllen vermag" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 190).

[49] Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 215. "Der erste Pol endlicher Freiheit, das «autexousion» wird uneingeschränkt als erstes Datum gesetzt, und erst im zweiten Schritt gezeigt, daß die so gegebene Freiheit sich zugleich in einem irdisch unabschließbaren Prozeß innerhalb des Raumes der göttlichen Freiheit verwirklichen muß" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 194).

way to share with others the wealth that they may be in need of. Having established that, Balthasar goes on and asks:

> Going out of ourselves and into "the other" is a sign both of poverty and of wealth, and this twofold character precipitates a further choice: will finite freedom use the wealth of its being open to enrich itself further, or will it regard its being open as the opportunity to hand itself over to infinite free Being, to the Being who is the Giver of this free openness?[50]

It is really interesting that, in completely independent way—in the context of Mariological considerations—Tischner came up with an almost identical idea. He focused on the aspect of meeting and dialogue—two of the main subjects of his research interest. Examining the scene of the Annunciation, i.e. the meeting and the dialogue between Mary and Archangel Gabriel, and backing it up with the analysis of *Magnificat*, he spotted the Mariological paradox of simultaneous poverty and wealth. First, he discussed the poverty that anyone (not only Mary) must experience during the encounter of that type:

> I am reading the words of the *Magnificat*: "... he has looked upon the humility of his handmaid." These words speak about encounter and poverty. They point to a very particular poverty—the poverty which results from an encounter. The greater the encounter, the greater the poverty. […] The miracle of encounter is that only at that moment we discover how poor we are with respect to whom we have met. We met someone and we have nothing to give. What can a human being give the Angel for his coming and bringing a gift? With what can it be reciprocated? [...] It was only this greatness of the encounter that showed humans how small they were. This annunciation impoverished them so much.[51]

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[50] Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 228. "Der Ausgang aus sich ins Andere ist Anzeige sowohl einer Bedürftigkeit wie eines Reichtums, und diese Doppelheit fordert nochmals eine Entscheidung heraus: ob die endliche Freiheit den Reichtum ihres Offenseins dazu benützen will, sich selbst anzureichern, oder ob sie ihr Offensein als die Möglichkeit ansieht, sich an das unendliche Freisein und Freigeben des Seins zu überantworten" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 206). It is worth adding that for Balthasar, the archetypal model of the experience of simultaneous wealth and poverty experienced by finite freedom is the intra-Trinitarian experience of happiness in the mystery of mutual exchange of gifts: "In other words, this happiness is expressed in the identity between «to have» (*haben*) and «to give» (*weggeben*), that is, between wealth and poverty. In God, neither poverty precedes wealth, as if He were compelled to go out in the Trinitarian process in order to gain himself (as it is held by idealism), nor is wealth preceding poverty, as if the Father had existed alone for himself before the Son was begotten (as Arianism understands)" (Pyc, *Chrystus*, 242).

[51] "Czytam słowa *Magnificat*: «… wejrzał na uniżenie służebnicy swojej…». W słowach tych jest mowa o spotkaniu i o ubóstwie. Wskazuje się tu na szczególne ubóstwo – ubóstwo płynące ze spotkania. Im większe spotkanie, tym większe ubóstwo. […] Na tym właśnie polega cud spotkania, że człowiek dopiero teraz odkrywa, jak bardzo jest ubogi wobec tego, kogo spotkał. Spotkał i nie ma nic do dania. Cóż może człowiek dać Aniołowi za to, że przyszedł i przyniósł dar? Czym może się odwzajemnić? […] Dopiero wielkość spotkania ukazała mu niskość. To zwiastowane tak go zubożyło." (Tischner, *Książeczka pielgrzyma*, 14).

Secondly, the Cracovian thinker observes that, on the other hand, the same encounter becomes a source of overwhelming wealth which overpasses any expectations. In fact, this is the only true wealth:

> The real treasure of a pilgrim is a human being he meets—someone who will show him the way and give him a helping hand, even for a moment. That person will be like the Angel of Annunciation—he will be the grace, happiness, signpost, delight, silence, and the belief that no one is a lonely island. The Man of the Annunciation is the herald of the true wealth.[52]

The attitude that finite freedom must assume in order to open itself for a relationship with infinite freedom is the ability to accept and experience the paradox of simultaneous poverty and wealth. This has to be experienced first in the encounter with other finite freedoms, but eventually, it is meant to enable us (finite freedoms) to open ourselves for something much greater.

4.2. The Paradox of God "Latent" Yet "Accompanying"

In previous section, the anthropological side of the paradox of the relationship between finite and infinite freedom has been discussed. It turned out that—from the perspective of a finite being—the possibility to establish a relationship with infinite freedom results from its bipolar structure. This structure equips finite freedom with never-ending ability to open up itself to ever greater and deeper encounters during which it learns to experience its ever-deeper poverty and hence becomes able to receive and share ever greater wealth.

However, on the other side of the story, there is this infinite freedom, which, regardless of how far finite freedom broadens its horizons, deepens its perception and increases its ability to enter into relations, will always surpass it in an absolutely inconceivable and unimaginable way (*Deus semper maior*).[53]

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[52] "Prawdziwym skarbem pielgrzyma jest spotkany na drodze człowiek – człowiek, który mu wskaże drogę i poda pomocne ramię, choćby na chwilę. Człowiek ten będzie jak Anioł Zwiastowania – będzie łaską, szczęściem, drogowskazem, zachwytem, ciszą i wiarą, że nikt nie jest samotną wyspą. Człowiek Zwiastowania jest zapowiedzą prawdziwego bogactwa" (Tischner, *Książeczka pielgrzyma*, 15).

[53] De Lubac brought attention to this issue by pointing out to the message from the first chapter of the Constitution *Dei Filius*: "in the year 1870 the First Vatican Council reminded some too audacious theologians that God will always be *super omnia quae praeter ipsum sunt vel concipi possunt ineffabiliter excelsus*" ("il fut encore en 1870 celui du Iᵉʳ concile du Vatican, rappelant à des théologiens téméraires que Dieu sera toujours «*super omnia quae praeter ipsum sunt vel concipi possunt ineffabiliter excelsus*»", Lubac, *Petite catéchèse*, 48). Balthasar went even further in this direction—touching again on the paradox—by claiming that "God himself is always greater than himself on the basis of his triune freedom." See Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 259 ("Gott selbst immer größer ist als er selbst aufgrund seiner dreieinigen Freiheit," Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 235).

Thus, Balthasar looks now at the same problem but from another, i.e. theological, perspective and asks how God behaves that, despite all that infinite disproportion, finite freedom is granted the entry into an authentic relationship with him. It will not come as a surprise that this behavior must exhibit a highly paradoxical nature. Balthasar calls it the paradox of God who is latent and accompanying (or revealing himself).[54]

In order not to dominate finite freedom with its presence, infinite freedom—in its generosity—"hides" itself or "withdraws" to the background, lending space for creatures so that they can develop their own autonomous freedom. It is not difficult to notice the paradoxicality of the situation—all of that must happen despite obvious omnipresence of God and the undeniable fact that all creation, whether it wants it or not, is always completely immersed in him. Balthasar is fully aware of it:

> They only gain room for freedom, however, if God, in allowing them freedom, withdraws to a certain extent and becomes latent. He who cannot be absent from any place thus adopts a kind of incognito, keeping many paths open for freedom, not only in appearance but in reality, for he is always at work and continually liberates his creation for freedom.[55]

God, who never ceases in the history of salvation to be the One who reveals himself, decides to "hide himself" not from humans, but for them. For, unlike the biblical Adam, God does not need to hide from anyone. However, if he wishes, he can hide for the good of someone, when he sees that they are not yet ready to receive his revelation.

That is why God never imposes himself and never converts anyone by force. Those who are open to him, he lets them know about his gentle, accompanying presence. Those who close themselves to this presence are allowed to live as if God did not exist at all. God has no need of an immediate success. Father de Lubac understood it perfectly, justifying this apparent passivity of God with, concealed in it, deeper wisdom:

> We must not be impatient. […] The craftsman respects the resistance of matter; he knows he would gain nothing by "forcing". Still more is it necessary to respect the resistance of persons. Better an order which is less easy, a less coherent universe, a more arduous

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54 In Balthasar's thought, this paradox plays one of the key roles. In addition to the theodramatic aspect discussed here, the theologian from Basel devotes much space in the first part of his *Trilogy* to the study of the aesthetic aspect of the problem. Readers interested in this aspect are referred to: Pyc, *Chrystus*, 127–144.

55 Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 273. "Raum für Freiheit aber erhalten sie nur, wenn der freilassende Gott in eine gewisse Latenz zurücktritt, wenn er, der von keinem Ort abwesend sein kann, ein gewisses Inkognito annimmt, worin er nicht nur scheinhaft, sondern wirklich der Freiheit viele Wege offenhält, indem er, der immer Wirkende, die Freiheit immerfort freisetzt" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 248).

harmony, a slower building up, than success which, though better in appearance, is secured at the price of stifling what is best.[56]

Despite that, as Balthasar clearly states, infinite freedom always acts, even if most of this action takes place in the background. God equips finite freedom with appropriate gifts and encourages it to dispose of them freely. To illustrate this situation, the Swiss theologian refers to the biblical parable of the talents:

> The parable of the talents which the merchant or king distributes to his servants before going abroad shows us how God is latent: he gives them an acting area in which they can creatively exercise their freedom and imagination; but what he gives them is *his* wealth, which they can use wisely or fritter away. First of all they are endowed with the talents; they possess something with which they can act and play—their finite freedom. But between the giving of this gift and the use and exercise of it lies a certain interval that belongs to the human *autexousion*.[57]

De Lubac, in his turn, notices that this attitude of the latent God is often imitated by the saints. That is why they are so accessible to others. True saints will never "crush" their neighbors with their "greatness" or "effectiveness," but rather will attract them with their modesty, captivating "old-fashionedness" and beauty of the fruits they left behind themselves in their hidden lives:

> Many saints are not known until after their death, and many, even after their death, remain unknown. […] Now most of them hardly wonder, even today, if their faith is "adapted", or if it is "effective". They are content to live on their faith, which for them is reality itself, ever the reality of the actual moment, and the fruit that proceeds from their faith, though often hidden, is no less fine for that, nor less nourishing.[58]

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56   Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, 147–148. "Il ne faut pas être impatient. […] Le praticien respecte les résistances de la matière: il sait qu'il ne gagnerait rien à «forcer». Plus encore est-it nécessaire de respecter les résistances des personnes. Mieux vaut un ordre moins facile, un univers moins cohérent, une harmonie plus laborieuse, une édification plus lente, qu'un succès, meilleur en apparence, obtenu au prix de l'étouffement du meilleur" (Lubac, *Paradoxes suivi de Nouveaux paradoxes*, 111).

57   Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 273. "Was mit der *Latenz* gemeint ist, zeigt das Gleichnis von den Talenten, die der in die Fremde ziehende Kaufmann oder König seinen Dienern einhändig: er gibt ihnen Spiel-Raum, worin sie ihre Freiheit und Phantasie schöpferisch betätigen können; er gibt ihnen aber *sein* Vermögen, das sie erspielen oder verspielen können. Sie werden zunächst mit den Talenten begabt, sie besitzen etwas, womit die spielen können – ihre endliche Freiheit –, aber zwischen dieser Begabung und deren Verwendung und Aktuation liegt ein Intervall, das zum menschlichen *autexousion* gehört" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 248).

58   Lubac, *Paradoxes of Faith*, 198–199. "Beaucoup de saints ne sont connus qu'après leur mort, et beaucoup, même après leur mort, demeurent inconnus. [...] Or la plupart ne se demandent guère, aujourd'hui même, si leur foi est «adaptée», ni si elle est «efficace». Il leur suffit d'en vivre, comme de la réalité même, la plus

Nevertheless, the concept of the latent God, carries with it some further paradoxical dangers. For when entrusting freedom to creation and withdrawing himself to the background, or rather apparently hiding himself, God must take into account the possibility of a bad use of this freedom on the part of creation, and of "depriving himself" of the possibility of a direct intervention at the moment when finite freedom, acting on its own, enters a wrong path.[59] This is an unavoidable consequence of the authenticity of the gift of freedom:

> The gift of man's area of freedom, with God latent within it, implies and accepts the possibility of going astray, with all the consequences this may bring: *one* false step may lead in the wrong direction; the first mistake may lead right up to the last.[60]

Tischner adds, however, that even at such moments, God remains always present, and his voice will always be audible, although finite freedom will retain the right to follow a different voice according to its choice. The thinker from Kraków upholds that this situation is an indispensable element of the divine-human drama and constitutes its eternal horizon:

> The biblical story of the fall of Adam and Eve still remains the horizon of the philosophy of drama. […] In the story of the fall, the voice of good that resounds between Adam and Eve is the voice of God. The voice of evil is the voice of the tempter (in this case the serpent).[61]

If finite freedom chooses the voice of good, i.e. the offer of infinite freedom, then the way leading to their mutual participation can be considered open.

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actuelle toujours, et les fruits qui en découlent, fruits eux-mêmes souvent cachés, n'en sont pas moins beaux, ni moins nourrissants" (Lubac, *Paradoxes suivi de Nouveaux paradoxes*, 159).

59 Balthasar describes this situation in terms of the possibility of "profound error in the realm of the finite," see Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 274 ("das tiefe Irrenkönnen im Endlichen," Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 249).

60 Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 275. "Das Geschenk des Freiheitsraumes und die darin liegende Latenz Gottes nimmt die Möglichkeit der Irre in Kauf, mit alle Folgen, die diese nach sich ziehen mag: daß ein falscher Schritt vermutlich in falsche Richtung abführt, die erste Irre bis zur letzten fortleiten kann" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 250). It is worth adding that in Balthasar's thought this aspect is deeply connected with the mystery of Holy Saturday: "The behavior of uncreated freedom is described by Balthasar not only as latency (*Latenz*), but also as accompaniment (*Begleitung*). The absence of God, as in the biblical parable of the talents (cf. Mt 25:14–30), creates an occasion for erroneous behavior on the part of finite freedom. However, in the light of the mystery of Holy Saturday, God's absence appears as full of loving respect for created freedom, accompanying man in all, even the most complicated moments of life" (cf. Budzik, *Dramat odkupienia*, 200).

61 "Horyzontem filozofii dramatu pozostaje wciąż biblijna opowieść o upadku Adama i Ewy. […] W opowieści o upadku głos dobra, jaki brzmi między Adamem a Ewą, jest głosem Boga. Głos zła jest głosem kusiciela (w tym wypadku węża)" (Tischner, *Filozofa dramatu*, 296).

4.3. The Problem of Mutual Participation

In the previous sections, the attitudes of finite and infinite freedom were analyzed respectively, so as to identify the conditions for the possibility of their fruitful encounter. Finite freedom enters the path of gradual opening up to others and strives for more and more freedom. At a certain stage of this self-transcendence, it begins to perceive, feel and open up itself to infinite freedom, which has opened itself previously, emerging gradually from its state of latency. Following de Lubac, Balthasar clearly distinguishes these two stages (natural and supernatural), while pointing to their inseparable connection, integrity and complementarity:

> What begins, at the "natural", personal level, as our having to believe in another's freedom and love, is perfected at the "supernatural" level, where human freedom (which includes insight) is challenged to make an ultimate act of faith in absolute freedom and love.[62]

Here emerges the first, very important aspect of the paradox of mutual participation. Finite freedom—being objectively always completely immersed in infinite freedom—gradually begins to realize it subjectively. Thus, it undertakes efforts toward self-transcendence. From a purely human perspective, however, these efforts seem doomed to failure. From this perspective, finite freedom seems to be completely immersed in the depths of corporeality, materiality and all kinds of limitations of this world, but not in God. Balthasar ironically recalls that an attempt to break free from these shackles may be reminiscent of Baron Münchhausen's grotesque efforts:

> Would this not call for a vantage point outside history? And surely no man can take up such a vantage point without surrendering his very existence (Unless, like Münchhausen, he can extricate himself by climbing up his own pigtail).[63]

At this point, Tischner draws attention to yet another aspect of the discussed paradox. Apparently, finite freedom does not have to undertake all these efforts which seem to exceed its natural capabilities and may expose it to failure, embarrassment and discredit. After all, one could try to live as if God did not exist at all. The Cracovian researcher, however, immediately notices that such a life brings human existence to the shallows of mediocrity:

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[62]   Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, III, 459–460. "Was auf der «natürlichen» persönlichen Ebene als Glauben-Müssen an fremde Freiheit und Liebe beginnt, vollendet sich auf der «übernatürlichen», wo der menschlichen (und damit einsichtsvollen) Freiheit en letzter Glaube an absolute Freiheit und Liebe abgefordert wird" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/2, 423).

[63]   Cf. Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, IV, 77. "Bedürfte es dazu nicht eines Standorts jenseits der Geschichte, den kein Mensch, ohne sich aufzugeben, beziehen kann, er müßte sich den wie Münchhausen am eigenen Zopf aus der Verstrickung herausziehen können?" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, III, 73).

Finite freedom without the encounter with the Infinite Freedom fades away. But the encounter with the Infinite Freedom is possible only in Christianity. [...] The fact that only in Christianity the intercessory meeting between the finite and the Infinite freedom is possible made Christianity play such an important role in the history of human freedom.[64]

The key observation, common for Tischner, Balthasar and de Lubac,[65] regarding the condition of the possibility of the encounter between both freedoms, is the emphasis on the gratuity of grace, an element that is absolutely indispensable and characteristic of the Christian Revelation. No matter how great the efforts of finite freedom were, they would always fail if not for the absolutely free act of openness on the part of infinite freedom:

> Finite freedom must transcend itself, but it cannot annex to itself the realm of the infinite. […] Even if it regards its faculty of self-transcendence as inherent in its nature, every act it performs in the direction of transcendence can only be performed because the realm of infinite freedom has disclosed itself.[66]

Next, we come to the second and the most profound aspect of the paradox of the reciprocal relation between finite and infinite freedom. It should be stressed that we are talking here about authentic reciprocity. Thus, it is not only finite freedom that is invited to participate in the inner life of infinite freedom. Paradoxically and inconceivably, infinite freedom is also invited by finite freedom to participate in its interior life, and it accepts this invitation in the mystery of the Eucharist. Of course, also in this case, the giver is still the infinite freedom: "by definition, infinite freedom is free to impart itself to others; it is not in the power of finite freedom; it remains grace, that is, the freely given indwelling of infinite freedom in finite freedom."[67]

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64 "Wolność skończona bez spotkania z Wolnością Nieskończoną marnieje. Ale spotkanie z Wolnością Nieskończoną jest możliwe wyłącznie w chrześcijaństwie. […] Okoliczność, że jedynie w chrześcijaństwie możliwe jest zapośredniczające spotkanie wolności skończonej z Nieskończoną, sprawia, iż w dziejach ludzkiej wolności chrześcijaństwo odegrało tak ważną rolę" (Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, 386–387).

65 In these considerations, Balthasar follows in general the path outlined by de Lubac in his analysis of the relation between nature and supernature (grace). The subject is very wide and cannot be treated here in detail. In this regard, it is worth to consult the following studies authored by Balthasar himself: *The Theology of Karl Barth*, 267–325 and *The Theology of Henri de Lubac*, 91–104.

66 Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 313–314. "Endliche Freiheit muß sich selbst transzendieren, kann aber nicht von sich her den Raum der unendlichen für sich beschlagnahmen. […] Auch wenn sie die Anlage zur Transzendenz als zu ihrem Wesen gehörig bezeichnet, wird doch jeder Akt, den sie in Richtung auf das Transzendente setzt, nur kraft der Selbsteröffnung de unendlichen Freiheitsraumes geleistet werden können" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 286).

67 Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 232. "anderseits ist unendliche Freiheit definitionsgemäß frei, sich zu gewähren, sie liegt deshalb nicht im Verfügen der endlichen Freiheit, sie bleibt Gnade: freigeschenktes Einwohnen der unendlichen in der endlichen Freiheit" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 210).

It must therefore be remembered that although the relationship of both freedoms is mutual, it can never become symmetrical. The infinite disproportion has always been, is, and will always be present here, although paradoxically—but only under the above-mentioned conditions—it does not interfere with genuine reciprocity.

These considerations allow Balthasar to understand how it is possible that, on the one hand, infinite freedom can "fit" into finite freedom, and, on the other, finite freedom will not get lost and will not be "crushed," but on the contrary, it will be able to realize itself and come to its full identity inside infinite freedom:

> Thus, finally, it becomes clear why finite freedom can really fulfill itself in infinite freedom and in no other way. If *letting-be* belongs to the nature of infinite freedom—the Father *lets* the Son be consubstantial God, and so forth—there is no danger of finite freedom, which cannot fulfill itself on its own account (because it can neither go back and take possession of its origins nor can it attain its absolute goal by its own power), becoming alienated from itself in the realm of the Infinite.[68]

This does not mean that the paradox has been resolved and the mystery—explored. The paradoxicality of the mutual participation of the two freedoms is irremovable, and the related mystery will remain forever unfathomable. The above considerations convince us, however, that despite all this paradoxicality and mystery, here we are dealing neither with internal contradiction nor with absurdity, but as Balthasar aptly puts it, with a miracle:

> Only on the basis of this miracle can finite freedom, endowed with the gift of self, know itself to be addressed as a "thou" and so designate itself an "I" vis-à-vis the Giver. Indeed, it must draw the appropriate conclusion from being thus addressed and go on to call infinite freedom "Thou."[69]

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[68] Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 259. "Und damit wird schließlich klar, weshalb endliche Freiheit sich in der unendlichen wirklich erfüllen kann und es nirgends sonst vermag. Wenn das Sein-Lassen zum Wesen der unendlichen Freiheit gehört – der Vater *läßt* den Sohn gleichwesentlicher Gott sein usf. –, dann besteht keinerlei Gefahr, daß die endliche Freiheit, die sich aus sich selbst nicht vollenden kann (weil sie weder ihre Herkunft einzuholen noch ihr absolutes Ziel aus eigenen Kräften zu erreichen vermag), im Raum der Unendlichen sich selbst entfremdet würde" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 235).

[69] Balthasar, *Theo-Drama*, II, 287. "Nur von diesem Wunder aus kann die zu sich selbst begabte endliche Freiheit such als ein Du angesprochen wissen und dem Begabenden gegenüber als en Ich bezeichnen. Ja, sie muß aus diesem Angesprochensein die Folgerung ziehen und die unendliche Freiheit ihrerseits mit Du ansprechen" (Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/1, 261).

Conclusion

Henri de Lubac, one of the main precursors of the modern renewal of theological thought, in addition to the postulate to return to the sources and to exhibit a greater sensitivity to the anthropological approach in its relation to the supernatural, also put forward the postulate of recognizing the importance of the phenomenon of paradox in theological research.

The method used in this work, the essence of which is to perceive the paradox and explore the mystery behind it, is an attempt to provide a constructive answer to de Lubac's appeal. This method, combined with the confrontation of Balthasar's thoughts with the reflections of de Lubac and Tischner, has allowed us to obtain a number of conclusions, the most important of which will be briefly summarized below.

In the field of research regarding the concept of finite freedom, the main result concerns a deepened understanding of the essence of the dynamical nature of this freedom in the context of—as postulated by Balthasar—the bipolarity of its structure. This in turn helps to overcome the apparent contradiction between freedom and its limitation (finiteness).

A secondary result, in this respect, pertains to the identification of the ultimate source of finite freedom. Based on Balthasar's and Tischner's reflections one can track down this source directly to infinite freedom by appealing to the protological truth that finite freedom is created in its image and likeness. This allows us to explain the possibility of any manifestation of any kind of freedom in an apparently completely deterministic world.

As for the concept of infinite freedom, it is important to notice the inalienable role of the Christological dimension in order to gain an insight into the reality of this concept, which reveals the inadequacy of purely philosophical considerations (from ancient pagan thought to modern systems based on Hegel's approach). The resulting in-depth analysis of the essence of infinite freedom allows us to shift our cognitive efforts in this field from the aspect of the limitlessness of choice and power to the aspect of total ability and readiness to give oneself to others.

Considering the relationship between both of the two freedoms, a new look at the conditions of the existence of the seemingly impossible non-trivial relationship between finiteness and infinity has been presented in the light of the paradox of the latent and accompanying God. An important element, examined here, is the subtle combination of the gratuity of grace and simultaneous action and latency of infinite freedom with the readiness of finite freedom to open up itself to the paradox of simultaneous poverty and wealth resulting from the encounter.

In this context, the key observation is that the authenticity of reciprocity of this relationship can never be understood in terms of symmetry. One should always remain

aware of the extreme disproportion between both concepts. This in turn explicates the undecidable nature of the paradox associated with it and the unfathomable depth of the mystery hiding behind it. As suggested by Balthasar, the only relevant category in which this relation should be considered is that of a miracle.

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Verbum
Vitae

The Mediation in the Human Cognition of God in the Thought of Paul Tillich

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Abstract: Paul Tillich was one of those important theologians of the 20th century who devoted much attention to issues related to theological theory of knowledge. In Tillich's thought, God is the mystery of being infinitely close to man, but human cognition of this mystery is always mediated. This article analyzes the question of mediation in human cognition of God in the thought of the great protestant theologian. First, the mediating, symbolic character of all religious language is presented. Then the mediating nature of theology is analyzed. The third part presents the importance of mediation in human cognition of ultimate reality. The conducted research leads to the conclusion that, according to Tillich, there is no other way of thinking and talking about God than mediated in the created world. God ultimately remains a mystery that is revealed to us through the reality that surrounds us.

Keywords: Paul Tillich, mediation, cognition of God, symbol, apophaticism

Mediation plays a key role in human cognition of God. Although God himself is – as Paul Tillich claims – directly present in human life, getting to know Him, discovering his presence and expressing it with words must take place through a certain mediation. What is the role of mediation in human knowledge of God in the light of Paul Tillich's thought? This article will attempt to answer this question. The basic mediator in knowing God is the language, which in the field of religion always remains a symbolic one. The first part of this analysis will be devoted to the issue of religious language. This language reaches its highest form in theology, rational reflection on faith, which is also mediating in its nature. The next part of the article will be devoted to the mediation of theology. After discussing the role of language and theology, there will be a summary of the importance of mediation in human cognition of God. Paul Tillich's thought provides some clues on how to combine the belief in the radical transcendence of God and his closeness to man with the need of mediation in thinking and speaking about the Ultimate Reality.

1. The Symbolic Nature of Religious Language

When speaking of the mediating nature of theological knowledge, one cannot ignore the fundamental issue of religious language. It is worth considering briefly

the present context of the question about this issue. First of all, it is almost taken for granted today that language is a particularly privileged tool for learning about reality. Concepts influence human perception of a given aspect of reality, and, according to some thinkers, even shape the reality. The latter approach was represented by Immanuel Kant, according to whom the conceptual grid is something previously present in the knowing subject.[1] This subject imposes his concepts on the world, which then appears to him precisely in the key of these concepts. According to Kant, these are, above all, categories such as: time, space, substance, or cause. 20th and 21st century philosophy with an analytical profile places the problem of language at the center of philosophical issues in general. While for classical metaphysics the problem was the ability of language to describe being, contemporary philosophy makes language a problem in itself. More and more the problem of language is also becoming central to theology. The status of linguistic cognition, the question of the possibility of expressing reality itself in language, take on their final dimension in the theological theory of cognition. Since the object of theology is not *de facto* an object, as it transcends the subject-object structure, the question arises as to how we can speak about it at all.

How could the language touch the Unconditional? First of all, it is worth noting that if a person describes his encounter with reality through language, he describes the objects he meets. God, however, is not an object, so the language, as it seems, should not touch him at all. In such a case, however, theology would be completely unnecessary and inherently wrong. This problem is actually a theological-cognitive continuation of the problem of the end of ontotheology. If God in theism is seen as one of beings, he can undoubtedly be described in language as all other beings are described. However, since God is that which is Unconditional, he cannot, according to Tillich, be directly described in terms of thought and language, which in such a case would condition Him.[2] With language, man expresses his encounter with reality, but one meets God in a completely different way than finite reality. So using language to think and talk about God also seems to be a miss. At first glance, there seems to be no way out of the paradoxical situation of the subject who recognizes God. If he does not want to fall into the idolatry of ontotheology, he must settle for complete silence, which seems impossible in the face of genuine religious experience.

Paul Tillich was very well aware of this paradoxical situation of language in theology. He also had a peculiar answer to the question of the scope and manner of using human language in relation to the Unconditional. First, however, it is worth considering Tillich's critique of the descriptive understanding of the role of religious language. The counterpart of ontotheology at the level of theological theory of knowledge is, according to Tillich, literalism. It is about a vision of the language of religion

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[1]   Kant, *Critique*, 394.
[2]   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 82.

in which it literally captures the Ultimate Reality. Literalists think they can describe God as a normal object of knowledge. This manifests itself first especially in the field of biblical exegesis. Literal reading of Scripture is associated with a literal understanding of the events described in the Bible. The crossing of the Red Sea or the stopping of the sun described in the Book of Joshua are seen as some historical facts that happened in exactly the order and form as it is described.[3] Such an interpretation is not only wrong from the point of view of a theological theory of knowledge, but also from the point of view of biblical exegesis itself. The latter has learned to distinguish the literary form of the books of Sacred Scripture from the historical background which is hidden, as it were, under literary descriptions.

According to Paul Tillich, biblical literalism was a great challenge for 20th-century Christianity. This view makes fun of the Christian faith, which in the context of the scientific and technical mentality of modern man appears to be naive and unacceptable.[4] Today, biblical literalism is rather in retreat, it can only be found in certain radical fractions of evangelical Protestantism, especially in the United States.[5] It is especially clear in exegesis how great a trap it is. However, it is not limited to this area. Literalism is a broader phenomenon that encompasses the entirety of thinking and talking about God. It is therefore about understanding and applying statements about God in the same way as making statements about anything else.[6] The literalist treats the Unconditional as an object on which he can speak literally and descriptively. This is often related to the misconception of revelation, according to which it consists in revealing by God some objective facts about himself. If revelation is understood as a self-descriptive statement of God, then it is indeed possible to see in theology a literal description of divine reality based on proven data. According to Paul Tillich, literalism is a tragic error that obscures the essence of religion and the knowledge of God. If you understand him, he is not God, said Saint Augustine.[7] Knowing God cannot mean learning literally about Him. It is a knowledge that always remains a mystery knowledge. The mystery of God can never be fully grasped, therefore the role of language in theological cognition is radically different from the role of language in describing created reality.

The reaction to the fallacy of literalism and the inadequacy of language in the field of theology seems to be simply silence. If language is used to describe objective reality and God transcends this reality, it seems that language cannot be applied to God. Such optics are shared especially by the great religious traditions of the Far East.

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3   According to Tillich, literalism did especially great damage in the exegesis of the first chapters of the Book of Genesis. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, II, 29.

4   Tillich, "A Reinterpretation," 306.

5   Zieliński, *Protestantyzm*, 58–59.

6   Paul Tillich ("Reply," 341) argued: "I believe that this kind of thought is a rationalization of the Biblical symbols into an objectifying description of physical-supraphysical processes."

7   Augustinus, *Sermo* 52, 16 (PL 38, 360).

Buddhism in particular encourages restraint in the use of language in religion and in spiritual practice in lieu of theological considerations.[8] A summary of this approach would be the famous sentence crowning Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."[9] The solution that is extremely opposite to literalism is therefore a radical apophaticism that manifests itself in absolute silence. However, the fundamental question arises as to whether such far-reaching apophaticism can be sustained at all.

Religious language cannot work as a description, but avoiding this language entirely is perhaps impossible for a person with religious experience. Such a person wants to pass on his experience to others, to give it some expression. In this respect, language is a natural and necessary means of expression. Thus, it is impossible to avoid religious language – it arises automatically as a means of communicating experience. The history of religion also shows that religious language is constant and necessary. Even those religious trends and traditions which eagerly emphasized the inadequacy of language in relation to the infinite mystery of God, at the same time could not completely abandon religious terms. After all, to say that God transcends the world that can be described linguistically requires the use of the word "God." Absolute (silent) apophaticism is an illusion. Bearing in mind the incompatibility of language with the Transcendence, one has to admit that language is a tool of getting to know God and communicating the truth about Him.[10] It cannot, however, be a language used in a metaphysical manner, that is, on the basis of the subject-object structure. The language of theology is not a language of description, there cannot be any literalness here.

Paul Tillich's answer to this problematic status of language in religion and theology is as follows: the language of religion is in its entirety a symbolic language – "man's ultimate concern must be expressed symbolically."[11] It is a language of symbols, it is not a literal description of reality. That is why Karol Karski will say: "One can talk about God – according to Tillich – only with the help of indirect, symbolic statements."[12] This language leaves the mystery character of the Unconditional intact. It is, however, some kind of language, and thus the breaking of apophatic silence. In Tillich's theology, the symbol occupies a central place and is, as noted inter alia by Jan A. Kłoczowski, a key concept at all stages of his creativity.[13] A statement is symbolic when it reveals more than its literal content. The symbol, with the help of conditioned reality, points towards the Unconditional. However, it is not a metaphor that can be replaced by a literal description of the fact. That is why Tillich will say:

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8   Tillich, "Christianity and the Encounter," 309–317.
9   Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 90.
10   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 241.
11   Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 44.
12   Karski, *Teologia*, 83.
13   Kłoczowski, "Teolog «troski ostatecznej»," 339–340.

"Each symbol reveals a certain layer of reality to which non-symbolic speech has no access."[14] People use the language of symbols to express what cannot be expressed literally.[15] A feature of the symbol is also that it is not alien to what it is trying to express. Unlike any sign, a symbol is not arbitrary.[16] In himself, what the symbol refers to shines and becomes present. The language of religion has such a symbolic character and cannot have anything else.

Tillich insistently repeats that every sentence about God is symbolic. An exception are metaphysical statements of a borderline nature. "If we say that God is the infinite, or the unconditional, or being-itself, we speak rationally and ecstatically at the same time. These terms precisely designate the boundary line at which both the symbolic and the non-symbolic coincide."[17] In any case, the language of religion, which breaks down the apparent alternative between literalism and silence, is a symbolic language.[18] It means that the language of religion immediately relates to what is beyond the language. Thus, by the very nature of things, the language of religion not only is symbolic, but also it cannot be otherwise.

Since language can somehow relate to God the question of the purity of the faith expressed in that language arises. The threat of idolatry appears wherever a concept or idea takes the place of God himself. However, it is canceled when the symbol is treated as a symbol. The danger arises only when the symbolic nature of religious utterances becomes known. Such secondary literalism means that even originally symbolic utterances are again understood as objective descriptions of God's being. In this case, idolatry does take place, because the supposedly described God is not the real God. On the other hand, if one is really aware of the symbolic nature of the religious language, there is no possibility of idolatry. "The relation to Being Itself must be mediated in a specific symbol along with its conditioning and insufficiency."[19] As Tillich emphasizes, the symbol has a self-contradicting character. Religious language is therefore not idolatrous as long as its symbolic character is kept in mind. It is not easy, however, because Christianity does not lack literalistic tendencies. Every now and then, says Tillich, there is someone trying to depreciate the symbolic nature of religious language. It has been said that since something is "just a symbol," you shouldn't really worry about it.[20]

Each symbol shows something of the symbolized reality, but cannot express it fully. Ultimately, it transcends it, and it transcends it infinitely (since this reality itself is infinite). Therefore, each symbol ultimately crosses out itself, pointing to

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14   Tillich, *Pytanie*, 138.
15   Tillich, "Religious Symbols," 397.
16   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 239.
17   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, II, 10.
18   Tillich, "Existential Analyses," 396.
19   Mech, *Chrześcijaństwo i dialektyka*, 138.
20   Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 45.

something more. If a symbol draws attention to itself, it distorts its meaning. The actual purpose of a symbol is to be lifted above itself, therefore the more perfect the symbol is, the less it holds on to itself. Tillich emphasizes in this context that the crucified Christ is the perfect symbol. Jesus loses his life, denying, in some way, its particular value. The cross is a perfect symbol because it is perfectly auto-negative.[21] Jesus dies in order not to be in the center of attention as Jesus. He is in the spotlight, but as the Risen Christ. The same applies to other religious symbols. All of them are guiding towards God and making him present to some extent, but at the same time they all retain the apophatic dimension of knowledge of the Unconditional intact. From the very beginning, such a radical approach to the matter was met with sharp polemics and accusations of treason in the face of the specificity of the Christian revelation. For example, according to Georges Tavard, to speak of the language of revelation as symbolic is to deny the reality of that language.[22] However, it seems necessary to agree with Tillich. His critics forgot that the reality of revelation did not exclude the basic truth that God could not be grasped by man. Revelation does not end the radical transcendence of God, but even highlights it, making it close to man.[23] Therefore, it seems reasonable to speak of religious language as symbolic. After all, the symbol is not information about God. Immediately after making a symbolic statement about God, it can be denied according to the old principle of negative theology.

An important issue that is also worth paying attention to is the genesis of symbols.[24] As already mentioned, a symbol differs from a sign, since a sign can be set at will, changed and invented by one person. Unlike a sign, a symbol is not something arbitrary. It cannot be freely canceled and a new symbol cannot be inserted in its place. The real symbol is, in some ways, found. The symbol functions within a certain community, it is shaped in the historical development of a given culture. According to Tillich, a symbol never arises arbitrarily, but always arises as if by itself. A single person can neither bring into existence a new symbol, nor destroy a given symbol. The theologian's views are close to those of Carl Gustav Jung, whose influence on Tillich's thought is unquestionable. According to the eminent psychologist, symbols (archetypes) are products of the collective unconscious. So they do not come from a conscious decision or rational speculation of man, but they arise from what is unconscious. Symbols appear to people, it can be said that they are somehow given to them in advance. At the same time, symbols connect people because they are always a social thing, they are always common. There are no private symbols.

However, Tillich's interpretation differs somewhat from that of Jung. For Tillich does not stop at pointing to the collective unconscious as the source of the symbol.

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[21] "The symbol of the «Cross of the Christ», which is the center of all Christian symbolism, is perhaps the most radical criticism of all idolatrous self-elevation." Tillich, "Meaning and Justification," 420.
[22] Tavard, *Paul Tillich*, 81.
[23] See: Woźniak, *Różnica i tajemnica*.
[24] Tillich, "Religious Symbol," 267–268.

The ultimate answer to the question about the symbol's origin is the symbolic nature of reality. Reality itself appears symbolic because it reveals something more than itself. So symbols appear to man, and are not created by him. Their ultimate source is simply the Unconditional which manifests itself through the conditioned. So the problem of the theological theory of knowledge, and in it the question of religious language, ultimately leads to the question of revelation. It can therefore be said that the mediation in knowing God appears not only from below (as a symbol), but also from above (as a revelation). Symbols themselves combine into specific systems in which they relate to each other and condition each other. Such systems are, according to Tillich, myths.[25] Each myth is nothing but a set of symbols arranged in a certain order. And since a symbol is a necessary language of religion, a myth is also necessary. That is why Tillich cuts himself off from Rudolf Bultmann's concept of demythologization and proposes deliteralization instead.[26] The problem, in his opinion, does not lie in the existence of a myth, as it is necessary. The only problem is reading the myth literally, treating it as an objective description of reality. As Kłoczowski notes, commenting on Tillich's thought, it is literalism, and not the myth itself, that is grossly inconsistent with contemporary intellectual sensitivity and culture.[27]

Another issue is the relationship between symbol and theology. It may seem that while colloquial religious language is a symbolic language, the scientific language of academic theology is already a language that literally describes God or the supernatural world. However, as has already been said, no religious language is or can be nonsymbolic. Therefore, the language of theology, despite its apparent difference from everyday religious language, is also a symbolic language. It is false to oppose the language of religion and the language of theology. Both of these forms of language are formed by symbols. In the language of theology, they are more rationalized, but they still remain symbols. Jesus, speaking about the sower throwing the seed, is not so far away from the theologian who deals with the question of the relationship between human freedom and God's omnipotence. The language of parables and the language of speculative theology are symbolic languages. Ultimately, the Unconditional cannot be expressed in any human words. Language can only guide you to the Mystery and communicate its presence. After all, every religious language is therefore a myth. Theology is also a myth – its specificity lies in the fact that it is a broken myth.[28]

Tillich introduces the concept of a *broken myth* to emphasize the importance of rationalization in the development of religious language. It is therefore about the transition from religious language in everyday use to the language of theology. Konrad Waloszczyk, writing about Tillich's thoughts, notes that the broken myth

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25   Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 48–49.
26   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, II, 152.
27   Kłoczowski, "Teolog «troski ostatecznej»," 340.
28   Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 51.

remains a myth, but its mythical character is now clearly exposed.[29] When a literalistic threat is defeated and symbols are consciously used as symbols, the myth is broken. This does not mean that the myth is taken frivolously, as some naive story from the past that can only now be reliably explained. No, the myth remains indispensable and its relevance is not diminished in any way. On the contrary, breaking a myth makes it possible to concentrate on its true message and meaning, instead of discussing its supposed historicity or the literal nature of its elements. Theology is therefore not some eccentric intellectual entertainment for the elite, but a very important element in the process of knowing the Unconditional. On the basis of Tillich's thoughts, it can be said that in cognitive mediation a very important role is played by theology as a rationalized language of thinking and speaking about God.

2. The Mediation of Theology in Human Cognition of God

Theology plays an important role in the process of getting to know God. According to the discussed thinker, a theologian is a person endowed with a special gift of the Holy Spirit who carries out his mission in the Church. Thus, this is an understanding of theology not so much of an academic one, but rather of an ecclesial-charismatic one. The task of the theologian is extremely important for the entire community, and the theologian himself is endowed with a special calling.[30] What is theology as such and what are its tasks? Paul Tillich sees theology as a very important mission of the Church, consisting in a well understood apology.[31] According to the Protestant thinker, theology should always be apologetic. Antoni Nadbrzeżny, for example, indicated just such an apologetic shape of theology as defined by Tillich.[32] It is not, however, about a narrow understanding of this phrase, and therefore about a particular theological field, which today is most often referred to as fundamental theology. The point is that theology is a way of answering human questions contained in an existential situation. Theology is therefore the next, already advanced stage of getting to know God. It is not the same as faith, although it is based on it and requires it at the point of departure. While faith is, according to Tillich, a state of ultimate concern, theology is a form of intellectual reflection on this ultimate concern. The task of theology is to draw conclusions from the encounter with ultimate concern. The subject of theology, however, is still the same as that of faith – it is the Unconditional, ultimate concern in an objective sense. Theology, however, is not

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29   Waloszczyk, "O micie rozłamanym," 401.
30   Tillich, *Prawda jest w głębi*, 108–109.
31   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 6–8.
32   Nadbrzeżny, "Koncepcja teologii," 153.

identical with faith as such. Also, philosophy is not, in spite of some similarities, the same thing as theology. Philosophy examines ultimate reality by asking the question about being. Theology, on the other hand, always asks about the final concern, about what is ultimately important for man. For a philosopher, therefore, an objective study of the problem of being is sufficient, while the theologian himself must have the ultimate concern and derive his theology from it.[33] Paul Tillich notes, however, that the philosopher also sometimes shows a final concern and builds his philosophy on it. In this sense, the greatest philosophers have always been implicitly theologians as well.[34] Although they did not use theological language directly, they approached the mystery of being as their ultimate concern.

The philosophical search for the Unconditional often becomes secretly theological. The theologian, on the other hand, cannot avoid being a philosopher as well. Theology cannot ignore ontological issues, especially the matter of ontological difference. Tillich himself has clearly shown through his work that theology is inevitably linked with philosophy. The status of theology is in itself, therefore, mediating. It stands between faith and reason, between philosophy and revelation. Ultimately, it also stands between the knowing subject and the known Unconditional. According to Tillich, the role of theology cannot be overestimated. About how much religious language in his edition of the ordinary can check in daily use, with so much to the creative dialogue with contemporary culture, to justify the faith to today's man, you need a language of theology. Theological knowledge is therefore important not only for the theologian himself, but for the whole Church and its mission. Theology is a certain constitutive stage of getting to know God. As such, it is also of great importance to the idea of mediation present in theological cognition.

In order to better grasp the meaning of theology as an intermediary language in knowing God, it is worth taking a closer look at it. According to Tillich, theology must remain in tension between its two extreme, incorrect visions. The first misconception of theology is supernaturalism. This position sees the subject of theology in some supernatural world, built somehow on the world of everyday human experience. In such a vision God is above the world as some Supreme Being who, having created the world, is then radically separated from it.[35] God can intervene in the world, and sometimes he does. However, these are special external interventions from which God and the world are starkly separate. Supernaturalistic theology deals with the other world, disregarding the world in which man lives. The task of theology is then to show the supernatural world that is overlooked on a daily basis.

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33   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 6–7.

34   A theologian in the strict sense, however, is characterized by the fact that by criticizing the state of affairs (the transmission of the faith), he never ceases to represent it. The theologian is as if permanently immersed in the foundation of revelation, even when he critically examines the Bible, dogmas, etc. Tillich, "Religion," 394.

35   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, II, 6.

According to Tillich, this line of practicing theology is wrong and, especially nowadays, unbelievable.

The existence of some supernatural world and supernatural beings who would mysteriously influence human destiny has been questioned by the twentieth-century mentality. Theology which deals exclusively with the supernatural world understood in this way, in Tillich's opinion, distracts man from his own world and its problems. Therefore, supernaturalistic theology, apart from being philosophically unbelievable, distracts man from his existence. Instead of taking up the problems that people face, theology in this optics sends us back to the illusory beyond. It was precisely this understanding and experiencing of Christianity that Friedrich Nietzsche severely criticized, considering the concept of the afterlife to be particularly inhuman and non-life. According to this philosopher, supernaturalistic Christianity arises as a result of resentment among people who cannot cope with life here and now.[36] Tillich seems to agree with this critique of supernaturalism.[37]

The opposite extreme is naturalism. Generally speaking, this is the view that all reality is limited to the visible world. God is simply present as the world, in some sense he is identical with it. In naturalistic theology, God in no way transcends the world.[38] So it is in the extreme opposite of supernaturalism, in which God only transcends the world. However, Tillich also distances himself from naturalism. According to the eminent theologian, naturalism cannot justify faith as the ultimate concern at all. If God were only the whole of the world, he would not be worthy of unconditional attention. While supernaturalism disregards the world, naturalism overestimates it.

The concept of theology proposed by Tillich is somewhat between supernaturalism and naturalism. It is not, however, a precisely measured middle ground, which would be a compromise between one extreme and the other. The ecstatic concept, as the thinker himself defines it, is a positive and creative vision of understanding God and theology. In the light of this vision, God is present in the world as the creative ground and sense of all being. At the same time, however, the ground and the sense of being infinitely exceed being itself. Therefore, it is an ecstatic concept – God is present in the world, but constantly sends us beyond the world.[39] The resulting concept of theology is analogous. Its task is not to detach from this world and point to the supernatural world hidden from human eyes, which would only be the "real" world. But it is also not to stop at the world of everyday experience and explain it. Theology is always meant to take the world and human life seriously, while

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[36] Friedrich Nietzsche (*The Antichrist*, 72) states: "Under Christianity the instincts of the subjugated and the oppressed come to the fore: it is only those who are at the bottom who seek their salvation in it."

[37] Tillich expressed himself quite flattering about Nietzsche in *The Courage to Be* (p. 30), where he wrote, inter alia, that the philosopher had "the courage to look into the abyss of nonbeing in the complete loneliness of him who accepts the message that «God is dead»."

[38] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, II, 6.

[39] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, II, 7.

pointing towards ultimate fulfillment in the Unconditional. Such a positioning of theology also gives it a specific shape in its formal aspect. One of the most characteristic features of Tillich's theology is perhaps the theological method, which is one of the most widely commented aspects of the thought of the German-American theologian. This method found many continuators and polemists. It is a theological method of correlation.

The method of correlation is a thoroughly developed and reliably used theological method by Tillich. All *Systematic Theology*, constituting a kind of magnum opus of the author, is built on the key of correlation.[40] So it is not that this method is just a loose proposition by Tillich, which was not fully developed and applied. The method of correlation was actually used by its creator and fully embodied in the form of his philosophical and theological system. Oswald Bayer, discussing the importance of Tillich's theology, notes that the method of correlation determines the shape of the entire work of the author.[41] This method is based on the distinction between two poles essential for theology: the existential situation and the revelation. Every theology stretches between these poles. Each theology relates to human life and tries to illuminate it, each also draws from revelation and acts in its service. The problem is only to establish the right relationship, the appropriate coupling between the existential situation and the revelation.

Supernaturalistic theology is characterized by the fact that it ignores the human situation and focuses solely on the revelation.[42] Such a theology risks a complete detachment from life and a sterile monologue, because without taking into account the recipient's situation, the message becomes dead, even if it is literally faithful to the revelation. On the other hand, the theology of the naturalistic profile commits the exact opposite error – it accentuates the human situation and tries to clarify it, forgetting, however, about the transcendent nature of revelation, which is the source of all theology worthy of that name.[43] On the other hand, sound theology ignores neither the vector of the situation nor the revelation.

The theologian's task is to connect existential questions, contained in the human situation, with the answers provided by the revelation. In this sense, theology is based on correlation – it is the correlation of an existential situation and revelation. The theological method is therefore to find questions hidden in human existence and to provide answers to these questions contained in the revelation. That is why theology can never detach itself from the specific context of human life, and at the same time it cannot cease to be faithful to revelation. This revelation is the ultimate source of theology, but an analysis of the revelation itself is not enough. It must

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40 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 59–66.
41 Bayer, "Tillich," 23.
42 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 65.
43 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 65.

always be confronted and correlated with the life of a specific person. The correlation method itself places theology in an intermediary position. John P. Clayton notes this when he calls his book *The Concept of Correlation*. Apart from the fact that theology mediates the process of getting to know God (this theme will be further developed), theology itself is mediating in its nature – as Karski emphasizes, summarizing Tillich's views.[44] The mediation of theology consists here in linking human existence with revelation. Thus, when discussing the idea of mediation in Tillich's theology, one cannot ignore the problem of theology as mediator itself.

Theology understood in this way clearly differs from ontology or metaphysics. At the same time, however, according to Tillich theology is very closely related to ontology, which has already been emphasized many times. How can one understand the role of theology in relation to the ontological view of the world? It seems that, as in the case of the concept of Being Itself, this relation should be understood ecstatically. The point, then, is that theology cannot avoid ontological categories when describing man and his world. However, they are not binding and exhaustive. Ultimately, theology pushes beyond the world that can be described in terms of metaphysics. In relation to ontology, theology is therefore ecstatic – it contains ontology, but it refers further and deeper. Ontology in itself can only be a conceptual base, auxiliary to theology, but is not its source. The latter is only revelation, the testimony of which is especially the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.[45] Ontology thus appears as the language of theology, but only an introductory language. The final word belongs to revelation, which also answers ontological questions. Theology also mediates between ontology and God's word.

Another issue is the relationship between theology and existentialist thought. It is known that Tillich's theology strongly refers to and is influenced by existentialism. These influences are not hidden by the author himself, who directly takes over a lot of conceptual apparatus from existentialists, especially Martin Heidegger.[46] So how does theology rank in relation to the philosophy of existentialism? In Tillich's view, theology is undoubtedly thoroughly existential. Tillich already sees evidence of such a thesis in the Bible itself. For example, the Book of Ecclesiastes particularly clearly addresses the sensibilities of twentieth-century existentialists and raises questions similar to theirs.[47] It is all about what emerges from the very method of theological correlation – theology affects human existence and is always directed at it. There is no (or shouldn't be) a ready-made theology in itself that could only be secondarily applied to human fate. Like the philosophy of existentialism, theology is deeply touched by the problems of human existence. Theology always remembers

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[44]   Karski, *Teologia*, 78.
[45]   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 35.
[46]   Tillich, "The Nature," 403–410.
[47]   Tillich, *The New Being*, 168.

the drama of existence and everything it says is intended to illuminate this drama. The difference between existentialism and theology, however, is clear. According to Tillich, it consists in the fact that theology does not stop at merely analyzing the existential situation of man. In the 20th century, existentialism was the trend that exposed the mystery of human life and its drama in an unparalleled way.[48] However, it did not give any positive response to this drama. On the contrary, often unable to find this answer, it headed for nihilism and despair. This is what Tillich himself wrote about it: "The threat to spiritual life is not doubt as an element but the total doubt. If the awareness of not having has swallowed the awareness of having, doubt has ceased to be methodological asking and has become existential despair."[49] This is shown, for example, by the works of such writers as Jean Paul Sartre or Albert Camus.

Theology, on the other hand, provides a real answer to the question posed by existentialism. "Sometimes I have been called an «existential philosopher», or better, an «existential theologian». But there is no such a thing; because existentialism raises the problems of human existence; and theology, in the name of the religious symbols it interprets, tries to give answers, to these questions."[50] These answers are contained in God's revelation. Here too, the quasi-mediating role of theology can be seen. It is an intermediary between existentialism and the word of God himself. Only theology can bring the answers of revelation where the question of human existence is seriously asked. Therefore, it performs an extremely important intermediary function for contemporary culture, on which existentialism has left its mark. If in the twentieth century existential questions took on a clearly cultural-intellectual form in the form of existentialism, they demanded an answer also formed in some intellectual form. Theology is such a form. It can therefore be said that theology transcends existentialism towards the Unconditional. Thanks to theology, as Tillich understands it, the question about human life becomes at the same time a question about God. It is theology that binds the world of man and the world of God together, showing that the question of man is the answer of God himself. Existentialism is a very important sign of the times taken up by Tillich in his theology. It seems to be a significant sign especially because it helps to place human existence at the center of theological speculation. At the same time, the anthropocentrism of existentialism is transcended by theology towards theocentricism.

Another point that must be addressed in discussing Tillich's theology is that of experience. As we know, the problem of experience has acquired great importance in contemporary philosophical and humanistic thought.[51] It also becomes more and

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48   Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 139–140.
49   Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 48.
50   Tillich, "Philosophical Background," 416.
51   The fundamental role of experience, especially of historical experience, was pointed out by, for example, Hans-Georg Gadamer. See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*.

more important for theology.[52] In a sense, theology has always been based on and closely related to the Christian experience. Only today, however, has experience become a key concept in theology itself. Discussions about the role and place of experience in theological research flared up strongly in the time of Tillich, who could not help but address this issue. Paul Tillich focuses his attention on the problem of experience in his main work – *Systematic Theology*. He notes that experience is essential to a theology that cannot exist without being related to it. "The sources of systematic theology can be sources only for one who participates in them, that is, through experience."[53] Many theologians have even gone so far as to say that experience is the primary source of theology.[54] Attempts were made to place them in a number of so-called *loci theologici*, alongside Scripture, liturgy, Church Fathers, Church teaching and others.[55] In Catholic theology, an important moment in this matter came with the publication of the papal encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, in which John Paul II refers to the experience of individuals and communities as one of the sources of Mariology.[56]

Tillich's approach, however, is different. It would seem that such an existential thinker would eagerly place experience as the central theological source. Tillich, however, refuses to do so, arguing that experience is no source of theology at all. If theology had its origin simply in human experience, the answers to human questions would be in the human situation itself. "If experience in this sense is used as the source of systematic theology, nothing can appear in the theological system which transcends the whole of experience."[57] However, this is not the case, as evidenced by the drama of existentialism. Answers to human questions and existential problems can only come from outside. Of course, the "outside" is a metaphor, which only means that they are not answers derived from existence itself. The answer comes within human existence, but existence itself is not the source of it. Therefore, the source of theology can only be revelation. Tillich is firmly in this position to avoid the dangers of naturalism.[58] Theology has a message to convey that transcends the human situation, comes from outside of it. The role of experience is therefore crucial, but it is not a source. Hence, the role of experience is mediation. It is, moreover, one of the few places in the Tillich system where the theologian explicitly uses the term "mediation." "Experience is the medium through which the sources «speak» to us, through which we can receive

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52   Kowalik, *Funkcja doświadczenia*, 36–37.
53   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 40.
54   Friedrich Schleiermacher is considered to be a typical representative of this way of thinking.
55   Napiórkowski, *Jak uprawiać teologię*, 52.
56   John Paul II argues: "Furthermore, Marian spirituality, like its corresponding devotion, finds a very rich source in the historical experience of individuals and of the various Christian communities present among the different peoples and nations of the world" (*RMat* 48).
57   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 43.
58   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 65.

them."[59] The mediation of experience is the transmission of the revelation. Therefore, it is not only a mediation in getting to know God, but also a mediation in the appearance of God himself, and thus a mediation from above.

It can therefore be said that the problem of theology in Tillich's thought is the problem of mediation, which is at some point suggested by the author himself: "the task of theology is mediation."[60] It is an intermediary in the process of getting to know God. It is therefore a matter of bottom-up mediation which accompanies the believer in his cognitive journey towards the Unconditional. Theology plays an enormous role in this process of mediating cognition. In the light of Tillich's thoughts, theology is not merely some academic science that studies Christian doctrine. It is an important element of getting to know God, it is a certain way of knowing very important for the Christian community.[61] Theology mediates between people of a specific epoch, their life situation and God's unchanging revelation.

It is impossible to talk and think about God without using certain ideas, terms and concepts. Theology is precisely a set and system of them. It is therefore an illusion to break away from theology in the name of some alleged fidelity to the "pure Gospel." The four Evangelists also had their theologies with which the holy books are imbued. It is impossible to communicate God's message without practicing theology. It can therefore be said that theology is an indispensable mediator in the process of getting to know God, but also in the process of communicating God's revelation.[62] The mediation of theology also works in the sphere of teaching in the Church, because it is impossible to teach without any theological elements. The whole theology is therefore not only permeated with the idea of mediation, but also acts as an mediator. So it seems that getting to know God and any communication of this knowledge cannot be done without mediation. Although God is always directly present in human life, the discovery of this immediate presence takes place through the mediation of finite elements of reality that constantly refer to God. So it has to be reiterated that towards the Unconditional one goes through the conditioned. This is confirmed by the everyday language used when talking about religious matters. It is a symbolic language and thus, by its nature, it mediates. The transcendent reality cannot in any way be grasped by human cognition. Man expresses his religious experience only through symbols that not so much define, but rather lead indirectly to the Unconditional. On the other hand, theology, as a more scientific, systematic and coherent language, does not cease to be a symbolic language.

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59   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 40.
60   Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, xii.
61   For Tillich, theology is an essential function of the mission of the Church, therefore its meaning is discussed in the ecclesiological section of his system. Cf. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III, 201–204.
62   While the very presence of God is direct, its communication (theology) is always mediated. Tillich, "Problem of Theological Method," 307.

3. The Importance of Cognitive Mediation

Mediation is not a degree of knowledge, but the only means and a continuous path to getting to know God. In the face of the absolute closeness of God and, at the same time, his incomprehension, one cannot think or say anything about God except indirectly. This is why religious language is essentially an intermediary language. By pointing to the symbol as the essence of this language, Tillich aptly shows that language, on the one hand, can never reach God as some "object," and on the other hand, it must be used in relation to God, because religious experience requires communication.[63] Since one person wants to tell another about his faith, religious language is necessary and obvious.[64] This language may take the form of colloquial or systematically developed scientific theology. However, it always remains a symbolic language that refers to ultimate reality rather than depicts it. It is in this key that Tillich's concept of religious language is presented, for example, by Marcin Napadło.[65] Mediation in knowing God is therefore not an artificial creation, but flows, as it were, from the nature of things. It is hard to disagree with Tillich that all knowledge of God is symbolic, that is, indirect. It wonders why Tillich is so reluctant to use the very term "mediation." In any case, cognitive mediation is the only and inevitable path when it comes to any kind of thinking and discourse about God.

The Creator is known through his works and is identified only by analogy to these works. That is why Tillich writes: "*anatogia entis* is in no way able to create a natural theology. It is not a method of discovering truth about God; it is the form in which every knowledge of revelation must be expressed."[66] Beyond the intermediary path, there is only union and incomprehensible closeness, which are no longer discursive cognition, there are no thoughts, words and ideas in them – there is only presence. Wherever you want to say something about this presence, you immediately enter the realm of mediation.

One may ask, however, why resort to religious language at all. Thinking and talking about God may seem pointless, since man "lives, moves and is" in him (cf. Acts 17:28). Indirectly, the answer is contained in Tillich's concept of religion. According to Paul Tillich, religion can be understood in two ways.[67] In a narrower sense, it is a certain sphere of life that is devoted to beliefs and beliefs about God or gods. It is the sphere of religious worship and practices, as well as the sphere of a specific ethos and, above all, a myth, i.e. a set of religious beliefs. This is the common sense of the word "religion," that is how it is most commonly understood. Religion in this narrow sense is simply a particular sphere of life that functions alongside

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63   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, II, 240–241.
64   Walczak, "Bóg osobowy," 129.
65   Napadło, "Porozumieć się z Bogiem," 53–86.
66   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 131.
67   Tillich, *My Search*, 130–131.

other spheres: personal life, social life, culture, art, politics, economy, sports, and so on. On the other hand, in the broader sense, which, according to Tillich, is more appropriate, religion is not one of the spheres of life, but the ultimate depth and horizon of all its spheres.[68] In this view, religion is a reference to the Unconditional, it is simply faith, or ultimate concern. The state of ultimate anxiety guides a person in all spheres and aspects of his life.[69] By itself, it does not need a separate sphere and a separate language.

The believer seems to shape his whole life according to his faith, so he does not need religion in the narrow sense. However, this is not so because of original sin, that is, in Tillich's language, because of the alienation of existence.[70] By alienating existence, man has been uprooted from his life. The spiritual confusion of the human person makes it impossible for him to spontaneously remain in union with his ultimate concern. A special sphere of life is needed, which, through its signs, will remind man of his ultimate destiny and direct him towards it. Therefore, according to Tillich, religion is needed because of original sin. One can draw the conclusion from reading the work of the theologian that there would not be religion as a particular area of life if it were not for original sin. It is hard to disagree with this seemingly iconoclastic statement. It is precisely the alienation of man that requires him to have a religion, and therefore also a religious language.[71] The mediation in getting to know God is therefore paradoxically due to sin. Where the unity of man with God is steadfast, there is no need to "think of God" or use religious language. Even the very word "God," which, according to Tillich, is a symbol of God,[72] would not be needed. The mediation of creatures would still take place, but would not focus attention in any way on itself. Anything a man would encounter on his way would instantly send him back to the Unconditional. However, since the real human situation is not such a transparency of the world, but fallenness of original sin, the knowledge of God must be mediated and itself mediating. Religious language is necessary, symbols and theology woven from them are also necessary.

Tillich's intuition, pointing to the central role of symbols in religion, also seems to be very relevant today and of great importance. In view of the crisis that the Christian faith encounters in contemporary culture, it is undoubtedly essential to properly explain the meaning of the claims that Christianity proposes. An important sign of today's civilization is, for example, the enormous development of the science

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68   Karski, *Teologia*, 86.
69   Tillich shows especially the unity of religion understood in this way with culture and morality. Cf. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III, 100–102.
70   Tillich, "Estrangement and Reconciliation," 256–267.
71   Paul Tillich (*Systematic Theology*, II, 47) states: "Questions and answers, whether positive or negative, already presuppose the loss of a cognitive union with God. He who asks for God is already estranged from God, though not cut off from him."
72   Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 46.

and its impact on human mentality. The role of explaining the reality that religion used to play is now played by science. It is scientists who are expected to answer questions about the universe, they are asked to explain reality. This is all the more so because science becomes credible through the development of technology that grows out of it. Religion, therefore, left the position of the exegete of the world. Religious masters are no longer expected to respond to the genesis or structure of the cosmos. Many people thus abandon religion altogether, as compromised or possibly out of date. However, understanding religious statements as symbolic, one can conclude that the purpose of religion was never to translate the world. Religion in this sense is not a competitor to science, and myth is not a primitive precursor to cosmology. The task of religion is and has always been to point out the ultimate dimension of reality. The exact sciences, by their very nature, cannot have access to this dimension.

Religion, therefore, does not contradict or dispute with science, but touches on a completely different level. As Michał Heller says, "science gives us Knowledge, and religion gives us Meaning."[73] Tillich's concept of mediation helps to situate religion in this way. The language of religion is the language of symbols, and thus it relates man to the ultimate concern that cannot be expressed directly through human concepts and ideas. The problem, however, is a specific descriptive mentality that stubbornly links the category of truth with literality. For such a mentality, the myth is a lie because it does not accurately describe the actual structure of the world. The statements of the religious language are also untrue, because they do not harmonize with the truth about the world revealed by exact sciences. For example, the statement "God created the world" then runs counter to the scientific vision of cosmic evolution. Problems of this kind disappear automatically when one is clearly aware of the symbolic nature of religious language. This is not easy, because the descriptive mentality defends itself by claiming that possibly a symbol may be true in some way, but is always less important than the literal. Tillich himself – as H.D. McDonald reminds – lamented the common saying: "it's just a symbol."[74] In fact, it is exactly the opposite of what literalists want – a symbolic utterance expresses much more than a literal utterance can express.

The symbol is therefore not less, but more true than a description of the facts. "A religious symbol is true if it adequately expresses the correlation of some person with final revelation."[75] The hint from Tillich's theology is this: do not be afraid of a symbol. Emphasizing the symbolic nature of religious language is extremely important today and can help to avoid many misunderstandings, even leading to the atheization of entire societies. It is worth noting that this symbolic emphasis is

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73 Heller, "Rzeczy najważniejsze," 18.
74 McDonald, "The Symbolic Christology," 75.
75 Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 240.

not a liberal retreat, nor is it an attempt to say that the doctrine is not that important and should not be worried about. It is simply the recognition of a truth that has always been present in theology, though often forgotten. Unconditional God cannot be grasped by any human word. All human thoughts, ideas, words, statements, concepts can only point to Him, relate to Him. Language can only be an intermediary, which is why it is always symbolic.

What Tillich says about theology itself also seems very important. The drama of theology is essentially the same – it is the tear between revelation and the life of the person to whom theology is to be directed.[76] The history of theology shows how difficult it is to persevere in this tension. More than once theology began to speak a language that was too human, betraying the revelation and adjusting to the existing human situation. At other times, theology tries so hard to be faithful to the revelation that it forgets to whom it is addressed. Such theology does not take into account the existential situation of man and speaks arbitrarily using a language foreign to the contemporary sensitivity. Then it does not fulfill its role because it is completely incomprehensible to the recipients. The method of correlation is a good solution to this tension. This does not mean, of course, that only Tillich was the first to use this method and that only his theology was faithful to both poles: situation and revelation. The method of correlation has always been used by the great theologians of Christianity, and Tillich's merit is clearly articulating the problem and naming this method.[77] It is an intermediary method because, in its light, theology becomes an intermediary between human life and revelation. The lessons of Tillich's method of correlation are not so much the method itself as a concrete, formal path to building theology, but rather a deep theological principle. The point is that theology must always remain faithful to God and at the same time be faithful to man. According to Karski, the method of correlation also means that the meeting between God and man means something real for both parties.[78]

At the same time, the mediation of theology is not exhausted in its correlation character. Theology is a mediator in itself, it mediates between the seeking man and the God that is found. Therefore, theology is a very important mission in the Church, and not merely something elitist and of little importance. Since religious language is inevitable, it is also inevitable that it develops systematically. Theology therefore has an important task in the Church as a form of articulating its faith. The view of theology as having an intermediary function ensures that its mission is properly set up. The importance of theology is considerable – it is the pinnacle of mediation in the intellectual form of getting to know God.[79] Therefore: "If the medi-

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76   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 3.
77   Tillich, "Problem of Theological Method," 310–312.
78   Karski, *Teologia*, 79.
79   Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, III, 201.

ating task of theology is rejected, theology itself is rejected."[80] Such optics prevent the theologian from seeing his task as something that he does primarily for himself or possibly for some narrow group of interested parties. The theologian's mission concerns the entire Church. It can be said that the Church demands good theology because it belongs to it.

The most important issue concerning the mediation in knowing God, however, is the question of the legitimacy of mediation. It should be noted that mediation is in dialectical unity with God's directness. The path from the conditioned to the Unconditional is not a path that leads to the goal at the end. It is a way of getting to know what has always been directly given. The unity of God and man, this marvelous unity witnessed by the event of Jesus, is the starting point for every Christian idea of mediation.[81] Speaking anthropomorphically, it can be said that God does not need mediation, because He has always been a God of immediate proximity. On the other hand, man, in order to become aware of God's closeness and constantly return to it, needs the mediation of creatures and the mediation of language. It can be seen, therefore, that the thesis that sometimes functions, that mediation is something non-Christian, which was built up on the basis of the originally pure message of the Gospel, is not true. Yes, mediation can be understood in a pagan way, and such an understanding should be fought. On the other hand, orthodox intermediation is something inevitable in the conditions of existence. This is even shown by the theology of Paul Tillich, whose Protestant provenance would seem to indicate a negative attitude towards mediation. However, even Protestant theology cannot do without mediation, even if it itself professes otherwise. It was shown, for example, by Stanisław C. Napiórkowski, who diligently analyzed the Lutheran *Liber Concordiae* in the book *Solus Christus*.[82]

Conclusion

Summing up, it should be noted that in the light of Paul Tillich's thoughts, mediation in human cognition of God is simply something obvious and inalienable. At the same time, it does not mean that God is someone distant from man. On the contrary, precisely because of the closeness of God understood, man cannot think and talk about him otherwise than indirectly. In Tillich's thought, knowing God is ultimately accomplished through symbols. Therefore, religious language is always symbolic, and so is theology itself. The mediation of religious experience also plays an important role in getting to know God. The question about the genesis of the symbols that was raised

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[80]   Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, xiii.
[81]   Tillich calls this unity Godmanhood. Cf. Tillich, "A Reinterpretation," 310.
[82]   Napiórkowski, *Solus Christus*, 173–175.

above ultimately leads to the question about God's revelation. For if symbols are not freely created by people, but somehow come to them by themselves, it means that they are the fruit of an encounter with the Unconditional. It is God himself who is the source of the human religious language in the sense that he inspires it. Symbolism is therefore not some extravagant way of reading reality that only accompanies poets or mystics. Reality as such ultimately has a symbolic dimension, that is, referring beyond itself. The mediation in knowing God has its source, therefore, in the very structure of being through which God mediates himself for man. The knowledge of God is not based on any human ideas, but on God's revelation. The unconditional God, in revealing himself, does nothing but mediate himself in conditioned reality.

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Verbum
Vitae

Historical and Theological Sources of Secularism and Secularisation

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Abstract: This article proposes a new way of approaching the roots of secularism and its outcome that is secularization. The fact that this phenomenon arises precisely in a Christian world, which ultimately leads to a complete emancipation of that what is worldly toward religion, *profanum* toward *sacrum*, is astonishing. The process of European secularism has its beginning in the 11th century, when the so-called dispute about reason was initiated resulting, in the next epochs of human history, in an intensifying departure from transcendence in favour of a secular interpretation of reality. What ensued is a fading away of the classical understanding of truth as a "compatibility of entities with intellect" (*adaequatio rei et intellectus*), that is compatibility of understanding and reality, replacing understanding with one's own crafting of reality, making of a new society. An examination of the history of the European secularization can contribute to a rise of a new humanism, which rests upon reasonableness that originates at the deepest basis of the Logos.

Keywords: secularism, secularization, theology, reason, truth, transcendence, Logos

Modern times are ever more strongly marked by the phenomenon of secularism and its fruit which is secularization (Lat. *saecularis* = secular; *saeculum* = world, century). The phenomenon is difficult to define unambiguously and precisely since there are many different approaches and hypotheses concerning the subject. The terms "secularism" and "secularization" are therefore not easy to define, because they carry different contents that at the same time take on different emphases. Secularism may be most generally defined as an attitude of the soul which excludes a religious interpretation of reality, and in particular favours the worldview without religion and the Church. It is a reduction of everything to the world with a simultaneous rejection of religion, faith and the Church, whereas secularisation – "laicity" is conceived of as an attitude promoting the fundamental assumption of the ideology of secularism which is "life without God." Hence, one talks of a "laicised society" or of a "lay culture," a "lay world." An example may be the secularisation of culture, which is a social process, where religion is removed from social and individual life and therefore, it is a process of liberating oneself from the influence of the revealed content,[1] of religious awareness and from religious institutions i.e. the Church.

1   Ruh, "Säkularität und Säkularismus," 414–418.

In this study, it is necessary to bring out more precise concepts of secularism and secularization. A specific mine of knowledge will be the concept of the history of theology based on the corresponding history of philosophy. This different way of searching for and defining the phenomena of secularism and secularization will shed new light on these issues. One ray of this light is the fact that European secularism is not a creation of the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries (George Jacob Holyoake; d. 1906), since its signs – and positive ones – were already visible in the theology of the 11th century (Chartres School).

It is known that the two phenomena of secularism and secularization cannot be equated, although this is often done, probably because they share the common feature of being non-religious. Secularism is a certain philosophy of life, an ideology, and even some form of secular humanism. As an ideology, it consciously proposes the rejection of all categories of religiosity and, above all, the rejection of the action of the Transcendent in relation to the world and man, making God the "great Absent One." Secularism as secular humanism is characterized by the glorification of temporal values and thus the exclusion of the supernatural from human life.

Secularization, on the other hand, is a sociological process occurring in culture from which negative as well as some positive elements can be extracted. It is characterized by a general laicization, a loosening of bonds with religion and a liberation from Church authority and dependence, a break with religious tradition and the sphere of the *sacrum*, as well as driving religion out of social and individual life. Some positive elements of secularization can be seen above all in its critical function with regard to faith and religiosity, which manifests itself in the rationalization of certain theological, religious and cultural concepts and thus helps the Church to free itself from its possible dependencies (such as political ones) and from those elements of religiosity that today seem to be unnecessary taints.

Modern secularisation is marked by four main qualities: autonomy – as a form of man's pursuit of self-determination and rejection of any dependence on authority; ideologization of science and technology by means of rationalising everything; voluntarism and individualism – where the basis of life is one's own action; temporalism – as confining oneself to temporality and living in the present moment. These qualities clearly point to an ever more extensive departure from the Christian tradition, the disappearance of the sphere of *sacrum* in individual and social life and removing the Church from public life. Then, secularisation may be understood as "laicisation," "desacralisation," "dechristianisation," as well as "secularism" and "secular humanism."[2]

Therefore, while secularisation is conceived, as noted, as a sociological process occurring in culture, and secularism is a certain ideology which liberates man from the guardianship of the Church even to such an extent that it ultimately results in

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2   Mazanka, "Refleksje o filozoficznych źródłach," 62.

a complete independence from God, and even to placing oneself in his position. Thus, the ideology of secularism leads to creating "secular humanism," which is characterized by two fundamental attitudes towards human beings: to limit their universal values to only worldly values, which leads to creating the so-called secularistic ethics, and to exclude all supernaturality and transcendence from human life, starting from man's fundamental relationship with God and ending with a materialist treatment of human nature, rejecting the existence of the soul. This leads to a gradual depreciation of personal and ecclesial faith, of religious life in general, and ultimately to agnosticism and atheism, and by the same token to "dehumanisation," to objectifying man by depriving him of metaphysics. Thus, secularism is anti-religious, anti-moral and anti-subjective.

Therefore, the pivotal question that arises is the one of the sources and causes of these contemporary phenomena of secularism and secularization.[3] Similarly, just like secularisation and secularism may be understood differently, also the sources of these phenomena are conceived of differently. If secularism was confined to materialism, it would have its roots already in the ancient world. Also, the emergence and development of Greek philosophy, which abandoned mythology in favour of drawing upon reason, clearly indicates the onset of secularisation.[4] Yet the proper signs of European secularism in the Christian world need to be sought in the 11th century, after the establishment of the School of Chartres, which began the so-called "dispute over reason," and then in the 14th century, when Marsilius of Padua and William Ockham formulated the programme of emancipation of lay authorities in relation to political and ecclesial authority.[5] This process was reinforced by the Reformation in the 16th century, drawing in particular upon Ockham. It considered faith to be "a private matter," and even "pathology," and thus contributed to creating "scientific" atheism. The sources of secularism also include the ideology of the Enlightenment, which questioned revealed religion, as well as a clear progress of anti-Christian tendencies of the French Revolution. Subsequent sources of secularization were brought by the emergence of modern culture shaped by the philosophy of Cartesius, Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, to natural scientists-mathematicians,[6] to modern secularisers: Karl Marx, Friedrich William Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud. Secularism also has its further roots in the book of the American theologian Harvey Cox *The Secular City,* which clearly put forward the thesis of secularism: to be free from religion in individual, social and institutional life.[7] Cox started from the absence of God in today's society. This was followed by the radical trend of "the death of

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3   See, e.g., Stallmann, *Was ist Säkularisierung?*; Lübbe, *Säkularisierung*; Taylor, *Ein säkulares Zeitalter*.
4   Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, I, 16; Reale, *Historia filozofii starożytnej*, 54.
5   Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 115.
6   Bartnik, *Historia filozofii*, 369–370.
7   Ruh, "Säkularität und Säkularismus," 415.

God" drawing upon Nietzsche. Therefore, cardinal Gerhard L. Müller[8] rightly asks: "Where is God in a secularised era?"

Looking at the history of Christian theology, one may still differently define and enhance the sources of modern secularism. They are marked by the great figures of philosophy and theology, who introduce revolutionary changes not only in theology but also in the whole social and cultural life. Chronologically, these figures appear in specific historical epochs.[9] For our subject-matter, the most interesting epochs are the ones since the Early Middle Ages until today. This is the time of the birth and development of European secularism.

1. The Era of the Early Middle Ages

The secularisation of the Early Middle Ages occurred at two levels. On the one hand, it concerned the dispute between the pope and the Caesar about the rule of the whole world, between the Church and lay authorities about the control of society. On the other one, secularisation concerned explaining everything by reason ever more clearly. Since the Church took over the helm not only of philosophy but also of other fields of knowledge, which strove to become more independent by means of a rational way of argumentation.

While in the early ages of Christianity the attempt was rather to defend faith against unbelievers, at the beginning of the Middle Ages this faith started to be justified rationally. The critical significance of human reason was discerned by Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109) at the end of the 11th century. In his work *Cur Deus homo*, he justified the truth of the Christian belief of the Incarnation of the Son of God and his vicarious sacrifice of reparation based solely on rational causes. Anselm employed the example of feud as a relationship of faithfulness, violating which involved a commitment to compensate the damage as well as an optional commitment as satisfaction (*satisfactio*). Man's sin, which broke the original relationship with God, renders such an optional commitment necessary. However, a sinner cannot do it, but only such a man who is without sin. According to Christianity, only the Incarnate Son of God is free from sin. And it is only him who can perform this task, i.e. mend the relationship of man with God and thus to redeem humanity through his death, interpreted as a divine act of reparation.[10] Thus, Anselm showed a positive significance of reason as a neutral instance, by means of which one may consider arguments for and against, in order to get to the critical truth. And additionally, he began to seek

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8   See Müller, *Der Glaube*.
9   Müller, *Katholische Dogmatik*, 95–103.
10   Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 138–139.

consistency between God's justice (*iustitia*) and mercy (*misericordia*), outlining the theological task for future times.[11] This rational discourse led to positive secularisation that mercy cannot be demanded just like justice, but it can only be contemplated.

Another important figure of this epoch is Peter Abelard (d. 1142), who continued rational thinking (*ratio*) about the truths of faith and orientated it subjectivistically towards one's own "ego." He postulated a critical assessment of religious message by reason. He considered theology to be a science, distinguishing it from religion. Theology must act rationally in order to ensure its independence from religion. Yet, the rationality of theology should not prove the subject of religion to be rational, but enhance it in a rational way. That does not mean that Abelard is a rationalist who wants to justify the Christian faith rationally, but on the contrary – he wants religion to be rationally safeguarded, and hence faith not to be undermined rationally.[12] Thus, he suggested solving all possible contradictions in theology by means of the instrument of reason according to the rules of dialectics.[13]

A particular role in further rationalization of theology and science was played by the cathedral School in Chartres and the School of St Victor. The School in Chartres, established by Fulbert of Chartres (d. 1028), gathered many theologians, who began a more extensive investigation of philosophical-natural sciences issues and cosmology. Thierry of Chartres (d. c. 1155) led the way with his work *De sex dierum operibus*, in which he made a commentary to the first chapters of the Book of Genesis in the vein of Plato's philosophy.[14] It fuelled the discussion between the Biblical message of the creation of the world and the Platonian myth of creation in *Timaios*, but also pioneeringly emphasized the significance of natural sciences such as: mathematics, astronomy, music and geometry. The activities of the School in Chartres were of significance for secularisation in this respect that they were understood as "removing the spell" of the way of perceiving things, including religion. Yet, this secularisation was not directed against faith, accentuating ever stronger the significance of reason.

The School of St Victor, founded by King of France Louis VI (1108–1137) himself on the outskirts of Paris in 1113, was in turn an important centre of intellectual life. Admittedly, the representatives of this School, mainly Hugo and Richard, dealt more with theology than with natural sciences but they strove to form new notions of existence, of the person and relationships, which changed the face not only of theology itself but also of science in general.[15] This conduct was a source of positive secularisation, too.

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11   Kienzler, "Anselm von Canterbury," 54–59.
12   Rieger, "Petrus Abaelard," 66.
13   Müller, *Katholische Dogmatik*, 192.
14   Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 144.
15   Berndt, "Hugo von St. Victor," 98–111.

2. The Era of the Mature Middle Ages

Similarly to the Early Middle Ages, also the Mature Middle Ages initially contributed to positive secularisation by means of a return to Aristotle's writings, even though they were, in their main points, opposed to the Christian faith, like e.g. the eternity of the world, metaphysical necessarism or a universal spiritual soul which enables one to cognize the world. It was these "aggressive points" which made theologians justify their science with arguments and defend it against other interpretations of reality. Since they gave rise to a new understanding of the world and of man themself that was founded not only on Revelation but on human reason. A brilliant systematician as for those times Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) adopted the main concepts of Aristotle's philosophy and built a system of expressing the Christian faith rationally, which theology utilized until the 20th century. Moreover, Aquinas considered theology not to be subordinate *ancilla theologiae* but to be an independent instance seeking the truth, which is critical also towards the revealed faith.[16] Thereby, he distinguished two orders of cognition: nature and Revelation, but at the same time he indicated that nature and grace are inherently oriented towards each other. This is confirmed not least by Thomas's fundamental conviction of the divine "primary cause" and worldly-human "secondary causes."[17]

Another figure of this period, William Ockham (d. 1347), clearly distinguished and separated theology and philosophy; he also introduced the axiom which at present is the basis for empirical sciences that the fundament of cognition is experience and also a requirement that one must form non-contradictory conclusions within one science. In Ockham, the path leading to secularism was separating faith from reason, since he elevated faith itself and limited reason solely to temporary reality. Yet Ockham's fundamental secularistic approach to reality consists in negating universal concepts (*universals*),[18] which he considers to be abstract. What is universal is a mental thing, and not an ontic term.[19] There exists only a single thing (*singularia*) as the departure point of all cognition. This is why general concepts like the Church or state do not have real reality, they exist only in the human mind. Hence, they have no superior value, and their only purpose is to ensure salvation to believers and good to citizens. Thus, Church authorities have no competence in relation to believers except for ministering to their salvation. This implies man gaining independence from the rule of the Church. This is already direct preparation for Luther's Reformation that a believer decides on given truths of faith, whether to accept or to reject them. By his *via moderna* Ockham breaks off with the previous tradition:

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16   Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 161.
17   Drewes, "Thomas von Aquin," 139.
18   Leppin, "Wilhelm von Ockham," 187.
19   Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, I, 563.

he separates philosophy from theology, faith from reason, the Church from state, Church authorities from secular authorities. This is a manifestation of negative secularisation which appears in such a strong vein for the first time. And even though Martin Luther (d. 1546) became acquainted with the theses of Ockhamism during his studies at Wittenberg University (1508–1512), and he also learned about the neo-Platonian theology of St Augustine due to his membership of an Augustinian order in Erfurt, it was not him alone who was the source of contemporary secularism. Yet Protestantism itself – with its persistent proclamation of individual freedom of faith and conscience – contributed significantly to the onset of the early modern period and modernism.[20]

3. The Era of the Reformation

Strangely, studies on secularism and secularisation do not deal with M. Luther. Maybe because he did not leave behind any systematic outline of his thought. He was acquainted with works of scholastic theologians like Gabriel Biel (d. 1495), Ockham, Duns Scot (d. 1308), Pierre d'Ailly (d. 1420) and Thomas Aquinas. Yet his activities were naturally significantly affected by St Augustine (d. 430) whom he favoured over all scholastics. Already during his first Bible lectures, Luther started to criticize intensively the main Aristotelian assumptions and thereby also the whole scholastic theology. This, however, could not have been a source of secularisation. It was more his understanding of the Church and the world, and in particular distinguishing the two kingdoms: the one of Christ and the one of the world, that resulted in leaving to spirit what was spiritual and to the world – what was worldly. Luther encouraged believers to take on themselves responsibility for the world.[21]

Undoubtedly, the dispute of Luther with the papacy, and first of all, a rejection of papal teaching or the teaching on the Eucharist and the sacraments, as well as on other important dogmatic issues, deepened the split between the Church and the Reformation movement originated by him and ultimately led to the Council of Trent and Counterreformation, but also to the establishment of Protestantism as a Christian church community. Thus, the western division of the Church and the establishment of a non-Catholic Church was the result of the protest directed against the secularisation of the Church.[22] Yet already since the period of the Enlightenment, Protestantism itself adopted clear signs of negative secularisation.

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20   Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 296.
21   Beutel, "Martin Luther," 60.
22   Müller, *Der Glaube*, 182.

4. The Era of the Renaissance – Cartesius

There have been – as has been mentioned – various approaches to secularism and secularisation. It is commonly thought that the era of the Renaissance not only brings new sources of secularization, but is also the cradle of the birth of secularism as well as the place and time of the transformation of secularisation into secularism. This era, mainly in the person of René Descartes (d. 1650), brought a new understanding of man and the world which consisted in a transformation from the mediaeval theocentric approach to the modern anthropocentric one. It is perhaps best expressed by Cartesius' maxim *je pense donc je suis*, translated later into Latin as *cogito ergo sum*. This means that the departure point in cognition is one's own thinking and a methodological absolute doubt. This is why the first pillar of cognition is not to "consider as true anything that is not so clearly and explicitly cognized that it cannot be questioned."[23] And thus, only this can be accepted as true which can be verified by one's own analysis and logical reflection. Since only two things are unassailable: the fact of thinking and my "ego" which thinks.[24] The surrounding world ceases to be a symbol of spiritual truths and it is reduced to an object of observation, where reason plays the most important role. The world simply assumes a secular character, instead of a divine one. It is no longer contemplated as God's creation, but as nature. However, God himself is not eliminated from man's cognition. It is him as the Most Perfect Being that remains the guarantee of the certainty of human cognition.[25] However, Cartesius has a different understanding of God, which is reflected in his saying: "The God of Abraham is not the God of philosophers."[26]

5. The Era of the Enlightenment

Undoubtedly, the Enlightenment became a source of secularisation and secularism by means of its ideas of freedom and independence, which were manifested in various manners by liberation from all authorities, traditions and institutions in favour of omnipotent reason. It is not, however, about undermining the priority of rationality brought about by the Enlightenment, but about its one-sided understanding, excluding the existing forms of cognition and action. This concerned mainly French thinkers, but also English and German ones.

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23   Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 256.
24   Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, I, 93.
25   Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 256.
26   Ratzinger, "Der Gott des Glaubens," 136–147.

What Blaise Pascal (d. 1662) criticized in Cartesius was the understanding of God as the one who must constitute a connection between *res cogitans* (consciousness, self) and *res extensa* (body) in order to ensure the certainty of cognition. However, this radical ontic dualism led to the breakup of sciences, where metaphysics deals with God, but by means of studying the mind, and physics – with" the world by means of studying matter. According to Pascal, the Cartesian dualism between *res extensa* and *res cogitans* can be overcome solely by the "heart" or by the "subtle soul."[27] Yet also here, one can recognize a new approach to man: they are a subject aware of themselves. This "subjectivity" which marks the transition from objective reality to subjective subjectivity becomes the banner of the early modern period.

Subjectivity is naturally the result of using human reason in two directions: either in combination with God's Revelation or based solely on natural principles. This is how deism (John Toland, d. 1722; Matthew Tindal, d. 1733) and empiricism (John Locke, d. 1704; David Hume, d. 1776) were born, particularly in 17th and 18th century England. This deism signifies belief in God, but in a different God: the God of mechanism.[28] Admittedly, he created the machine of the world, but then it continues to work by itself, without a break and without any irregularity. Since then, only what is natural has been important. Also, only natural knowledge counts. What is supernatural can be understood only symbolically. It was at the same time the beginning of the "theology of the Enlightenment," relying more on human reason than on Revelation. Theological rationalism, based on formulating the content of faith by means of human reason, was shaped primarily by Evangelical theologians.

French atheists went even further in this thinking of religious criticism in the name of reason. The Catholic abbot Jean Meslier (d. 1729) is considered to be the first modern atheist. He denied the existence of supernatural powers, including also Christian God.[29] Meslier's initially latent criticism of the Church was revealed only after his death by Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet, d. 1778), who, in his collected works, included the compiled manuscripts of the deceased as his "testament." Thus, Voltaire contributed to the development of anticlericalism. He himself was in favour of morality guided not by religion and the Church but by the human mind, while criticizing belief in God in the face of evil existing in the world. This new problem of theodicy was addressed by the German philosopher Gottfried William Leibniz (d. 1716): perfect God created the best of possible worlds, but he no longer gets involved in its course. The fact that evil exists in the world is an inevitable consequence of the existence of a limited, finite world. This is the reason why metaphysical evil exists (*malum methaphysicum*).

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27   Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 257.
28   Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, II, 246.
29   Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 267.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (d. 1781) went even further in his reflections on the criticism of religion. In order to learn the truth, one has to liberate everything from religious care and subject it to pure rational explanation.[30] According to Lessing, even Revelation did not give humanity what human reason arrived at.[31] Religion, including Christianity, plays only an educational function, and Christ – that of a moral example. Thus, it is not religion, not Revelation but reason that determines morality. The underlying general conviction in these Lessing's assertions is that there is no eternal invincible truth, but only quest for the truth.[32] Therefore, the history of humanity points to the development of an unlimited rule of reason.

The same spirit of criticism of faith in Revelation is present in Hermann Samuel Reimarus (d. 1768). He thought that supernatural Revelation was not necessary since religious truths may be learned naturally, by means of one's own reason.[33] Since then, authors have postulated more and more seeking the certainty and credibility of data outside religion, outside Revelation, outside the Church.

A stand against such materialistic-atheistic thinking was taken by Immanuel Kant (d. 1804). In his work *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* he sought to ensure religion the rightful place "within the boundaries of pure reason." According to him, religion cannot be considered to be irrational since, by means of theoretical reason, one cannot even prove the existence of God. Reason will neither prove the existence of God, not eradicate Him.[34] To achieve this, one needs experience independent from the concept of God. However, religion has its place within the framework of practical reason since the idea of God plays an indispensable function of justifying morality, so that one acts definitely morally considering the moral imperative of God's commandments. Religion is completely reduced to morality.[35] Therefore, it is not so much ritual practices but man's moral attitude that is the manifestation of a positive recognition of autonomy and secularisation, which result from Kant's criticism of cognition.

6. The Early Modern Age

What is characteristic of this period is not only further propagation of life sciences but also broadly conceived secularisation as emancipation of cultural, social and scientific life from the directives of religion and Christianity. The relationship between

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30   Bartnik, *Historia filozofii*, 327.
31   Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 272.
32   Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, II, 263.
33   Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 273.
34   Bartnik, *Historia filozofii*, 338.
35   Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, II, 350.

faith and knowledge, God and history was defined anew. In particular, the philosophy of religion of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (d. 1831) and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (d. 1854) contributed to the understanding of God as a process of the Absolute mediating the-act-of-coming to itself (*Zu-sich-selbst-Kommen*) throughout history. A manifestation of this is understanding the Incarnation of the divine Logos not only as entering time and history, but also as overcoming the opposition between time and eternity.[36] Then, God is not distinct enough from the world and this leads to God's "becoming" (*Werden Gottes*) in human consciousness.[37] This idealism expresses the Absolute solely as a potentiality which can be thought of (theoretical reason). It is absolute idealism which asserts that thinking, being, the truth, are all identical with spirit. That is why everything that is rational is real and what is real is rational.[38]

The Danish theologian Søren Kierkegaard (d. 1855) took a stand against combining theology and faith with the social thinking (spirit) of a given epoch. He thought that the belief in the man Jesus as God requires recognizing him also with reason as the Redeemer, and not cognizing him in his creation or human consciousness[39] – as the German idealists wanted. Thereby, Kierkegaard defined the mutual relationship of human existence to the process of faith, which faith is not accepting abstract truths, but becomes the basis for a special relationship of my "ego" to God. This is how the Danish Theologian becomes the forerunner of "dialectic theology" in response to "liberal theology." However, this criticism of Kierkegaard did not last long since the Evangelical Tubingen School began to deal with the autonomy of consciousness, which led to further secularisation.

7. The Era of Nihilism and Marxism

Undoubtedly, the unquestionable face of modern secularism is Friedrich William Nietzsche (d. 1900). Initially brought up in the spirit of Protestant pietism, whose basic intention was to form "a new man" risen from sin, already as a young man, he totally turned away from God and religion – mainly under the influence of David Friedrich Strauss' work *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet* (Tübingen 1835–1836) – thinking that faith is only subjectively true and Christianity is harmful. According to him, also morality is not objective, i.e. universally binding, but everybody has their own morality which suits them.[40] Nietzsche's loss of faith was further reinforced by

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36 Góźdź, "Czas a wieczność," 141–156.
37 Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 280.
38 Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, II, 411.
39 Ansorge, *Kleine Geschichte*, 287.
40 Bartnik, *Historia filozofii*, 413.

the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer (d. 1860), built upon voluntaristic meta-physics which results in pessimism because life is nothing else but a powerful fear of death and struggle with suffering.[41] This pessimism was discerned by Nietzsche also in the fact that Christianity proclaimed compassion, being on the side of the quiet, the suffering and the poor. Yet soon – Nietzsche prophesied – a man would be born who would bury the meek and weak man.[42] This will be an act of man's liberation and at the same time of a complete rejection of God and Christianity, and my means of this of radicalization of secularism.

A criticism of religion had been even earlier undertaken by Karl Marx (d. 1883). However, he did it from a social and economic standpoint and not from a philo-sophical one. For him, as well as for his friend Friedrich Engels (d. 1895), the fathers of historical and dialectic Marxism, religion is the main source of social alienation, where human creations take control of man. What is more, "religion is a set of false and anti-scientific assertions."[43] For the ruling class, religion is also a means of lull-ing the proletariat's vigilance – specific opium for the people – so that they should not break free of their tether. This criticism of religion in Marx has its roots, first, in his fascination with the philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach or Hegel, but he defined himself as a materialist and he also acted in the political and economic as well as social reality. As for Hegel, the first ones were ideas, for Marx it was – materialistic reality. Only this is true and decisive reality.[44] Much as Marx's views of the exploi-tation of the proletariat seem to be right, the worst evil of Marxism is rejection of God, negation of the personal character of man and of the highest moral values.[45] Especially, the so called Marxist humanism, considering man not to be a human in-dividual but to be a social being, a generic creature who is fulfilled in the action of collective life – strengthened modern secularism. Thus, combining the economic issue with religion had social repercussions and became the cause of negative secu-larisation, particularly after the October Revolution in Russia and secularisation in western societies.

8. The Era of Modernism and Post-modernism

Modernity – as the heir of the ideas of the Enlightenment – is characterized by such qualities which distinguish this epoch from the previous ones and, at the same time, constitute further development of secularisation and secularism. These are:

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41   Bartnik, *Historia filozofii*, 357.
42   Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, II, 515–517.
43   Bartnik, *Historia filozofii*, 386.
44   Hirschberger, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, II, 472.
45   Bartnik, *Historia filozofii*, 393.

conceiving of time as a dimension of human activity; making redemption worldly since it takes place in the human history; believing in the universality of reason; departing from the previously binding social structures; developing rationality and orienting it towards purpose-means.[46]

In the 1970s criticism of modernist centrism and rationalism gave rise to post-modernism (Lat. *modernus*, French *moderne* – modern), which introduced decen-trism, a negation of the category of unity and irrationalism.[47] A characteristic feature of the trend of post-modernism is the absolutisation of pluralism, irrationalism and chaotisation of freedom, which freedom fights with the objective truth, and also de-mands unrestrained freedom for each person, at the same time refusing the person subjectivity.[48] It may be added that further negative features of post-modernism as: explicit subjectivism, cognitive and moral relativism, anti-humanism, individualism and cultural nihilism – contribute very significantly to the development of secular-ism and secularisation today. Though this movement itself is already strongly dwin-dling today.

Conclusion

The outlined image of the rise and development of secularism and of its fruit – sec-ularisation – shows that it is a process which originated in materialistic and atheistic trends as far back as in antiquity, developed in the subsequent eras, and recently is taking on the form of even total anti-transcendental ideology. While in antiquity this process was rightly understood as abandoning mythical thinking in favour of ratio-nal thinking, in the Early Middle Ages it was a form of reconciling faith with reason, and today again it is taking on the form of powerful mythology. In the Middle Ages, it was an approach to understanding faith, as well as to the intellection of the whole Christianity, and in the times of the Reformation the whole error of secularism was revealed and it resulted in the self-secularisation of the Church, which went counter to the whole Tradition and today is assuming the form of a total negation of Tradi-tion, spiritual and intellectual. However, it needs to be remembered that secularisa-tion has brought no greater benefit to secular thought (Czesław S. Bartnik, d. 2020). Quite on the contrary – it has destroyed its rationality and has created a new my-thology of the world, culture and man, e.g. by holding that not only man is a person but that also animals, or even robots, are personalities. Such mythology is terrify-ing. The secularistic awareness of modern times has, in turn, resulted in indifference

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46 Vester, "Modernismus und Postmodernismus," 5.
47 Góźdź, "Problem teologii ponowoczesności," 6.
48 Bronk, "Krajobraz postmodernistyczny," 79.

towards the truth grounded in God, and thereby in "faith" only in the advances of natural sciences and technology as well as of global knowledge which rests solely on immanentism and thereby on atheism.

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Verbum Vitae

The Portrait of Isaac in Genesis 27: Between Synchronic and Diachronic Readings of Patriarch's Character

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Abstract: Modern critical reception characterizes patriarch Isaac as a particular character type: the schlemiel. This article provides a tour through the cumulative evidence for this comedic read, focusing on Genesis 27, the blessing of Jacob. It provides a revised narratological and literary context, arguing that Isaac's fivefold questioning demonstrates not confusion, but awareness: he knows exactly which son is in front of him. The paper presents an alternative narratological and literary context for Isaac, framing his questions in terms of the editing process: a synchronic reading of Isaac's acumen is corroborated by evidence from diachronic reading. The redaction history of the Isaac material in chapter 26 yields a number of points suggesting the dependence of the Abraham material on the Isaac narrative. A number of features indicate a stronger, less subordinate Isaac figure based on the earlier tradition revealed by a complex transmission history than the image arising from the mainstream synchronic reading of chapter 27 seems to depict.

Keywords: biblical interpretation, patriarchal narratives, history of reception, Isaac

The patriarch Isaac has received significant scholarly attention in the past three decades, being allotted a consistent theatrical type: the schlemiel. The *consensus scholarum* is that the Genesis account conveys a sense of undeniable passivity, dull-wittedness, even comicality about Isaac.[1] He is viewed as a subordinate link and a comic relief figure between the personages of Abraham and Jacob. The reception of the second patriarch as a fool, especially in its schlemiel variety, is basically unanimous among biblical commentators.

On closer inspection, however, Isaac's overall portraiture is much more nuanced. Elizabeth Boase has traced the redactional history behind Genesis 26, uncovering some earlier layers in the textual palimpsest. Boase suggests that there is a transitivity of traditions between Isaac and Abraham in general, and a different, more influential

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[1] For a detailed walk-through of Isaac's biography from Genesis from the perspective of the incongruity theory of humor, see Boase, "Life in the Shadows" and Kaminsky, "Humor and the Theology of Hope." See also the writings of Dennis D. Sylva.

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Isaac, in particular.[2] To Boase, the contrasting images of the patriarch arise out of different traditions, revealed by synchronic and diachronic readings respectively:

> The synchronic reading suggests that the subordination lies in Isaac's character portrayal. … The diachronic reading traced something of the redactional history of the Isaac material in chapter 26, suggesting that traditions had transferred from Abraham to Isaac, but also from Isaac to Abraham. This suggests that at one time Isaac was less subordinate than as now presented.[3]

The present article aims to demonstrate that this presumption of the former glory of Isaac, verified by Boase's meticulous diachronic reading, is an important theoretical basis for advocating the possibility of—and even evidence for—a non-simplistic understanding of Isaac's character through close synchronic reading of Genesis 27.

1. The Overview of the Comic Aspect of Isaac

We shall proceed by tracing the trajectory of the key characteristics and episodes that sketch Isaac as a dull, weak, or comical figure. Most scholarly testimonies see the uncomplimentary view of Isaac throughout Genesis, as is well summed up by Boase: "He [Isaac] presents as a shadowy, ill-defined and subordinate figure whose actions closely resemble those of Abraham."[4] Indeed, with the exception of chapter 26, all the episodes in which Isaac appears are those in which others are central characters. He is depicted as a largely passive figure dumped in the midst of events, as someone whose actions comply with the plans implemented by others. Boase points out an important textual detail that speaks much about Isaac's subordinate character position: he is nearly always referred to by his filial title, "the son." Isaac is thus defined by his affiliation with Abraham, depriving him of individuality and underscoring his symbolic rather than personal status.[5]

When scholars do find Isaac as having a personal identity, they generally see him as the book's fool. Joel Kaminsky, for instance, emphasizes the element of schlemiel humor in Isaac's portrayal. Kaminsky sees Isaac's depiction from early childhood in chapter 21 (the great party thrown at the weaning of the child) as one of someone in need of protection, vulnerable, a distinctly humanized portrait: "Indeed, it seems that this incident contains the first hint of Isaac's schlemiel quality:

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2   Boase ("Life in the Shadows," 328) notes, "A number of points suggest the dependence of the Abraham material on the Isaac narrative."
3   Boase, "Life in the Shadows," 333–334.
4   Boase, "Life in the Shadows," 312.
5   Boase, "Life in the Shadows," 315.

he is the 'active disseminator of bad luck.' The schlemiel Isaac, intending no harm to anyone, causes Sarah to demand that Abraham expel Hagar and Ishmael from their household."[6] In the context of Isaac's personality, this feast could also be considered the first comical adventure: Ishmael overshadows his stepbrother in whose honor the party is given, and Isaac has to rely on his mother's intervention and protection. Kaminsky argues that this scene opens a series of episodes in which Isaac plays a passive role, as others use him with respect to their own needs and thereby shape his future.

Isaac is, in the words of Chris Danta, generally read "from the point of view of the incongruity of humor … an incarnation of laughter."[7] This nature is tied to the very meaning of Isaac's name, "he laughs," writes J. William Whedbee:

> His name … bespeaks his character and destiny, but in a different sense from what such a happy appellation might initially suggest. Apart from the one occasion of his birth, Isaac is not usually the source of joyous laughter, nor is he a clever wit himself. Again and again he is laughed over … often … even duped. … Lastly, the characterization of Isaac as passive victim is best construed as comic. A hallmark of his role is his ordinariness; in all these ways he is a comic figure familiar to us all … laughable.[8]

George Kovacs and C.W. Marshall tie these moments of ridicule to their cursory meta-characterization of the contemporary perspective of Isaac as "postmodern takes on classical and Judeo-Christian figures and events (including Isaac, Prometheus, Athena, and the Flood)."[9]

In her thorough tour of the Isaac episodes surveying Isaac's dimwittedness, Boase aptly notes that in chapter 22 Isaac disappears from the scene of "the Binding of Isaac" as soon as he is saved.[10] The reader is never told that he is coming back with Abraham, which further emphasizes his symbolic position in the narrative. What has been Isaac's role here? Apparently, he had been used as an object through whom Abraham was tested; once the trial was over, there came no further need for him within the narrative. Moreover, even the story of the binding of Isaac contains certain schlemiel elements, if one takes into consideration the entire context of the Isaac narrative. The fact that he is willing to carry the wood, his question to Abraham after three days of travel about the absence of a sacrificial animal, and his silence after Abraham's answer perhaps all imply certain slow-wittedness rather than simple innocence and compliance. Certainly, such a reading emerges not based

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6   Kaminsky, "Humor and the Theology of Hope," 367.
7   Danta, "Sarah's Laughter," 350.
8   Whedbee, *Comic Vision*, 92–93.
9   Kovacs – Marshall, *Son of Classics and Comics*, xvii.
10   Boase, "Life in the Shadows," 317.

on this episode alone, but on the *cumulative evidence* of his appearances throughout Genesis.[11]

In chapter 24, "Isaac is the passive recipient of a wife."[12] His absence is quite conspicuous. This chapter, like the forthcoming 26, is again full of subtle hints at Isaac's slow wit and comicality. At the beginning, Abraham delegates his servant to find a wife for Isaac, who has lost his mother by this time (yet she will figure post-mortem in this chapter, fulfilling her protective maternal role once again). In verses 1–9, not only does Abraham send the servant to find a wife for his son, but he also stresses that Isaac must not under any circumstances leave the land of Israel and go to Mesopotamia: Abraham demands of his servant, "Make sure that you do not take my son back there" (v. 6), and, "Only do not take my son back there," (v. 8). Both Isaac and Jacob find wives in Haran, but what a contrast! Jacob is trusted (allowed? qualified?) to go there, whereas Isaac is explicitly prohibited from leaving the land. Later in chapter 26, this theme appears again, when God prohibits Isaac from going to Egypt ("Do not go down to Egypt," v. 2). The literary departure of Isaac from the patriarchal motif of leaving the land is significant in light of his personality. The obvious implication of this prohibition is that both God and Abraham worry about Isaac's ability to succeed—or perhaps even to survive the perils of the journey. The complementary bothersome aspect of the prohibition is the fact that Isaac is not entrusted the quest for his own wife. The text might suggest that he did not even know about the journey's mission—"Then the servant told Isaac all he had done" (v. 66)—but, in accordance with his compliant personality, he marries this stranger. Perhaps Abraham (and God) are concerned not only about Isaac's own inability to make the journey and fulfill the mission, but are worried that the bride would refuse to marry Isaac were she to meet him in the first place, as Kaminsky suggests.[13]

More elements of comedy in this chapter follow: the servant's test involves asking a woman to draw water both for him and the camels, a test that proves her eligibility as the wife of his master's son. The test might be essential, yet it is quite elementary, and Rebekah is the first person to take and to pass it right away. The marriage is "consummated" in the presence of Sarah's shadow, when Isaac brings his young wife into Sarah's tent: "and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" (v. 67). Isaac is the only biblical character to bring his new wife to his mother's tent.[14]

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11 For an insightful discussion and elaboration on Kaminsky's methodology of cumulative evidence for determining the comic in the Bible, see the introduction of Jackson, *Comedy and Feminist Interpretation*.

12 Boase, "Life in the Shadows," 317. In discussing this contrasting feature of passivity (Isaac vs. Abraham and Jacob who find their own wives), Kaminsky ("Humor and the Theology of Hope," 368) is tempted to refer to the modern medical theory that would account for "a diminished mental capacity" as a result of the incestuous union. That would fall out of the scope of the "schlemiel umbrella" qualities!

13 Kaminsky, "Humor and the Theology of Hope," 368.

14 Kaminsky, "Humor and the Theology of Hope," 370.

Chapter 26 is the third in the famous series of wife-sister episodes, in which Isaac is the protagonist. Here, Isaac closely replicates the patterns set by his father Abraham in Egypt and in Abimelech's court in Gerar. These similarities nevertheless do not preclude the appearance of a certain "comic brand" of Isaac's behavior in an already familiar situation. Isaac is caught "playing with Rebekah" (v. 8) outside of the king's window, which immediately exposes his deceit. Abimelech does not even get to take Rebekah into the harem, since the narrative pattern set up by Abraham is disrupted by this foolish act in an unexpected fashion.

The last time we see Isaac before he dies in chapter 35 is in chapter 27. Again, the *consensus scholarum* is that Isaac is fooled. "Despite his suspicions," writes Susan Schwartz, "the patriarch is ultimately fooled."[15] Boase notes similarly, "Isaac is portrayed as weak, confused, and manipulated by those around him. … His decisions are based on physical senses, not on thought and reflection."[16] A similar judgment is pronounced by Kaminsky with a minute analysis of the process:

> The final scene … is the one in which Isaac is tricked into blessing Jacob instead of Esau. … Isaac's tendency to favor Esau because he likes the food Esau prepares for him implies that Isaac has a propensity to overindulge in the baser pleasures and may also indicate that he is a bit dimwitted. … Clearly Jacob's fooling of Isaac does not reveal Jacob's great acting ability, but Isaac's utter stupidity. One wonders how Isaac could have failed to notice, or to take more seriously, the clues that indicate this cannot be Esau. Jacob returned too quickly with game for his father, and when Jacob is questioned about his all too swift success, he attributes it not to his skill as a hunter but to God's help, a piety that does not seem to fit Esau. Then Isaac notices that his voice belongs to Jacob but chooses to ignore this fact because he mistakes the goat hair that Jacob has on his hands and neck for Esau's body hair. Finally, Isaac declares that the clothes Jacob is wearing smell of the field, even though they were stored in Rebekah's house. Quite often blind people compensate for their lack of sight by developing a keen sense of touch, smell, and hearing. Isaac's lack of sensory perception and his general gullibility indicate that Isaac is either a dullard or perhaps senile at this point in life.[17]

This questioning of Isaac's reliance on the wrong sense nicely encapsulates the mainstream reception of Isaac as a paradigmatic fool.[18]

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15 Schwartz, "Brothers of Choice," 14.
16 Boase, "Life in the Shadows," 321.
17 Kaminsky, "Humor and the Theology of Hope," 371.
18 Jon D. Levenson, in his course on Genesis at Harvard School of Theology, used to ask this rhetorical question: "If you were blind, would you go by voice or by touch?" Kaminsky dedicates his article on Isaac to Levenson.

2. The Shift to Other Possible Readings of Isaac's Character

This characteristic of "a paradigmatic fool" encapsulates well this compact yet fairly full overview of the mainstream scholarly portrayal of Isaac. In what follows, we perceive a whole realm of renderings apart from the plane of comicality, which opens up certain possibilities that begin to point at the depth of Isaac's character. Curiously, the pendulum sometimes swings the other direction in assessments of the final scene in Isaac's life, and his schlemiel aspect vanishes, turning indeed into the very opposite. Adrien Bledstein, for instance, suggests that Isaac is the "arch trickster," a self-defense mechanism of the weak and unprotected.[19] In between this rather extreme contrast between Isaac as either trickster or fool, there is room for a wide array of readings. Nathaniel Hoover, for instance, provides a thorough analysis of Isaac's senses and comes out with different possibilities or degrees of Isaac's awareness with regard to the son standing before him. "How someone reads Isaac's knowledge level will have an effect on how she judges his character," observes Hoover.[20] Evaluating these options, he suggests that "Isaac may view the situation as a test of Jacob's character. How well does he perform under pressure?"[21] Here, Hoover provides an interpretation of Isaac as "the tester," a less radical assessment than "the arch trickster."[22] Barry O'Neill, in contrast, does not grant Isaac the same level of awareness, yet he gives him full credit for the attempt at verifying the son:

> It is a "deception" but not a "trick" in our terms, because Isaac tried to verify whom he was facing. He challenged Jacob for coming back from the hunt so soon and proceeded to apply every sense he had left to make sure he was blessing the right son. He questioned Jacob's voice and tasted the meal, but Rebecca had seen to that. He felt Jacob to find if he was hairy and then smelled him. In the end he was deceived, but he was not tricked. He could feel angry, but not foolish.[23]

Despite O'Neill's caution, Hoover is not alone in his assessment of Isaac as manipulative. David Zucker, for instance, has called Jacob "the deceiver deceived,"

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19 Isaac as the arch-trickster interpretation is based on the assumption that the storyteller is a female, and within this framework, "the woman's character is valued, and a man in authority is vulnerable and devious," which makes the man resort to trickery. Bledstein, "Binder, Trickster, Heel, and Hairy-Man," 290.

20 Hoover, "Who are You?," 36. Hoover provides a "chart of how the different senses are deceived in this episode": sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell (*ibidem*, 34).

21 Hoover, "Who are You?," 37.

22 Interestingly, it seems that while assessing the probable degree of Isaac's awareness, Hoover ("Who are You?," 17) still doesn't quite cease evaluating the patriarch as a dim-witted, primitive man, ascribing to him covert stupidity claims: "If Isaac is perceived as a man of appetite, he is then very much like Esau."

23 O'Neill, "A Formal System," 15.

arguing that "Jacob's betrayal plan notwithstanding, Isaac knows that it is his younger son before him. Isaac, in repeated statements, challenges Jacob's actions."[24]

3. The Revealing of Tragic Overtones

This spectrum of verdicts on Isaac in general and on chapter 27 in particular gradually leads us from the fool zone to the trickster territory. Yet even this shift leaves out an important aspect of the patriarchal portrait. Zooming in on Isaac in chapter 27, we may see him emerging less comic, less dumb, and, at the same time, less of a tester/teaser/trickster figure than he allegedly is in modern reception. As David H. Aaron notes in *Genesis Ideology*, Isaac questions who is standing before him no less than *five* times in verses 18, 20, 21, 24, and 26!

18: "Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?"
20: Isaac asked his son, "How did you find it so quickly, my son?"
21: Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not."
24: "Are you really my son Esau?" he asked.
26: Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come here, my son, and kiss me."

This rhetorical device makes altogether clear that the entire story revolves around Jacob's *inability to trick his father*.[25] The author disperses these hints subtly, and given Isaac's response to Esau later in verse 35—"But he said, 'Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing'"—one might believe what has traditionally been believed: that Isaac is a victim rather than a co-conspirator. The peak of Isaac's alleged uncertainty as to who stands in front of him is expressed in that famous verse 23: "The voice is the voice of Jacob, the hands are the hands of Esau." It is quite unlikely that Esau would appear before his father using Jacob's voice—and how could the voice be feigned anyway, Aaron asks.[26] Nor is the meal of domestic sheep a credible proxy for goat's meat. The pressing subtlety of these verses then does

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24   Zucker, "The Deceiver Deceived," 48.
25   See the following: Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 208; Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 440. Wenham argues that the questioning serves the purpose of suspense building, whereas Westermann treats the second inquiry in verse 24 after verse 21 as the first part of the blessing rite, when identification is confirmed. Both observations are valid and non-alternative, but pertain to the narrative structure, rather than the character's portrait.
26   Aaron, *Genesis Ideology*, 58. Aaron might be right from "scientific," medical, and psychological points of view. But is it absolutely not possible to feign the voice, especially the voice of the sibling? In addition: is it impossible to be deceived by the likeness of voices, whether it's psychology or acoustics? Yet there is a danger in raising an anachronistic question in translating the literary reality into the scientific realm.

not convey confusion on Isaac's part; rather, they suggest the character's perception of the situation: Isaac is well aware of who is before him!

The ultimate question then becomes the following: why does he act as a co-conspirator with Rebekah and Jacob? The key phrase is a nuance contained in verse 27 at the last test of a kiss, after the fifth questioning: "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that *the Lord has blessed*." The key phrase here is the last one: "that the Lord has blessed." Aaron concludes, "As Isaac sees it, Yahweh is sending Jacob."[27] This might also be an allusion to the previous chapter, verse 12: "Isaac sowed seed in that land, and in the same year reaped a hundredfold. The Lord blessed him." In this way, Jacob is his successor in blessing. The main point, however, is this irreversible understanding that the real author of the scheme is not Rebekah or Jacob, but Yahweh himself.

This is where the tragic overtones of Isaac as a character come in. Yet the beautiful elusiveness of this monologue is all too easy to miss. As a result, the interpreter continues to be under the impression of Isaac's dim-wittedness, or alternately assigns manipulative, trickster motives to the patriarch. Retorting the standard "Isaac fooled" stance, David Aaron points out that the confusion is signaled to the reader by the intervention of the redactor, who placed verse 23 between verses 22 and 24.[28] Verse 22 reads, "So Jacob went up to his father Isaac, who felt him and said, 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.'" Instead of proceeding to the logical conclusion of this statement in verse 24, "Are you really my son Esau?," the text adds the following comment in verse 23: "He did not recognize him because his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; and so he blessed him." This insertion of verse 23 reframes the story so that the reader can be certain that Isaac was *not* part of the conspiracy in the undermining of Esau's birthright. Now, with the help of the redactor, the story has one main purpose: to move Jacob back to Paddan-aram because of Esau's desire for vengeance, as well as Rebekah's concern to find a Jewish wife for Jacob, and this concern frames chapter 27 by verse 34 of the previous chapter and verse 46 of the current one—the verses about the fear of Hittite wives that are a source of bitterness to Rebekah.[29] This insertion of verse 23, according to Aaron, is a moment of ideology in this subtle psychological portraiture, a reframing of the story that used to be different before the intervention.

This is a watershed moment. We have come to one of the major pointers accountable for this conventional viewing of the protagonist as a fool. The intervening hand of the redactor is perhaps one of the clues to our understanding of Isaac as stupid, incompetent, and gullible. The redactor and the modern scholars are, as it were,

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The deception should rather be viewed as a literary and theological trope, in line with John Anderson's argument in *Jacob and the Divine Trickster*.

[27] Aaron, *Genesis Ideology*, 58.
[28] Aaron, *Genesis Ideology*, 59.
[29] Aaron, *Genesis Ideology*, 59.

on the same page, in their view on the character of Isaac. Yet clearly the phrase about the voice and hands is not an admission of confusion, but, on the contrary, a statement regarding Isaac's certainty. Isaac was *not* tricked in chapter 27, nor was he the arch trickster or the tester, as the one who out of weakness or alleged sense of power attempts (in futility) to gain control. The awareness, the ritual suspenseful probing, and the recognition of the divine will followed by submission yields depth, perspicacity, and a nobly sad nature to the portrait of the patriarch.

4. An Excursus to the Diachronic Reading

We have finally arrived at the intersection of the synchronic and diachronic analyses of the Isaac tradition in Genesis. A synchronic reading of Isaac's acumen can be corroborated by evidence from diachronic reading. Transmission/historical issues, in addition to the contemporary interpretations informed by the theory of comedy, are likely involved with the overall slant in the presentation of Isaac as a schlemiel and/or trickster. Boase delves into the most fertile ground for tracing redactional history, in which the transferal and development of traditions could be found in the duplicate stories, the variations on a theme that so abound in the Hebrew Bible.

A brief overview of two significant comparative Isaac/Abraham moments will be helpful for fine-tuning the habitually perceived Isaac figure. The redaction history of the Isaac material in chapter 26 yielded a number of points suggesting the dependence of the Abraham material on the Isaac narrative (such as evidence from the Abimelech covenant material and the wells material from chapters 21 and 26). As Dennis J. McCarthy and Claus Westermann concur, the Isaac episode in Gerar portrays Isaac as, if anything, a more powerful figure than Abraham.[30] Important traces of this evidence are such details as the extra adviser who comes with Abimelech's deputation: "Meanwhile, Abimelech had come to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his forces" (v. 26). This verse suggests a need for increased political weight in dealing with Isaac. No royal retinue, on the other hand, is reported in the Abraham-Abimelech episode. Isaac confronts Abimelech's approach, pointing to his eviction from Gerar, a deed possible only presuming Isaac's powerful status: "Isaac asked them, 'Why have you come to me, since you were hostile to me and sent me away?'" (v. 27). Abraham, on the other hand, does not question Abimelech's approach. Another vestige of Isaac's "primordial" significance is the reciprocity of the oath proposed by Abimelech and sworn by both parties: "The men swore an oath to each other" (v. 31). In Abraham's case, on the other

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30   See the discussion of the covenant in McCarthy, "Three Covenants in Genesis," 179–189; see also Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*.

hand, at the treaty of Beersheba Abraham alone swears to Abimelech: "Abraham said: 'I swear it'"" (Gen 21:24).

Conclusion

A more comprehensive list of features indicating a stronger Isaac figure based on looking into the earlier tradition within the palimpsest of the wife-sister stories is beyond the scope of this paper. The point in enlisting these examples is to demonstrate a complex transmission history that at the very least suggests that originally there were traditions associated with Abraham and traditions associated with Isaac. At one time, Isaac seems to have been less subordinate than the image we have of him now, neither a fool nor a trickster. He most certainly had traditions associated with him alone; his actions were not just a replica of Abraham's. As Boase concludes, there is both gain and loss for Isaac from the subsequent merging of the traditions: on the one hand, he obviously ends up being overshadowed by Abraham; and yet, the overshadowing is done by a figure as great as Abraham, and the reflected light of the first patriarch imparts the greatness onto his son.[31] The fact that Isaac, as it were, lives in the shadows in terms of his literary characterization is to some extent not his own "fault," but a result of the redactional development of the tradition.

These are some of the trajectories of thought and research that help account both for the generally accepted transmission of Isaac's character and for the emergence of what I propose to see as a different Isaac coming through in such a poignant un-relenting way in Genesis 27. The close-up of Isaac in chapter 27 draws the portrait of an astute, perceptive, and woeful figure—a clandestine portrayal that is easy to miss. But this zoomed-in treatment of Isaac sheds a different light on this figure than what has been generally done by scholarly consensus. May this focused perspective suggest a different synchronic vision of Isaac in the enigmatic figure of the second patriarch: materializing out of the habitual role of dumb-witted, ridiculous schlemiel there emerges a persona that is discerning, alert, and large-scale, as only a tragic hero could be.

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31   Boase, "Life in the Shadows," 334.

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Verbum Vitae

Mordecai Kaplan's Understanding of Holiness

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Abstract: The Reconstructionist category of holiness, reflecting the essence of God in traditional Judaism, is a challenge both to contemporary Jewish thought and to theological thought in general. This paper attempts to explain why and how Mordecai Kaplan—the forerunner of the most liberal trend in Judaism—embarked on a reconstruction of the biblical concept of holiness and demonstrated the consequences of his transformations. First, Kaplan's concept of holiness is discussed, followed by his description of the notion of "sancta" as advanced by the Reconstructionists. Next, Kaplan's understanding of holiness, which denotes the fullness of humanity rather than the essence of the personal God, as in traditional Judaism, has been presented. Thus, according to Kaplan, holiness is an anthropological and not a theological category because he understood it as a "transcendental validity" on the path to attain human self-fulfillment in this world. From the perspective of tradition, the Reconstructionist concept of holiness results in Judaism's desacralization, which can primarily be seen in the desacralization of God, the Torah, the Chosen People, and the Sabbath. Even allowing for Judaism's diversity of views and positions, Kaplan's concept of holiness is truly revolutionary in modern Jewish thought.
Keywords: Holiness, God, Man, Judaism, Mordecai M. Kaplan, Jewish Reconstructionist

Contemporary Judaism is not a monolith; among all its contemporary currents, Reconstructionism is not only most recent but also most controversial. The other trends (Orthodox, Reform, Conservative) are incarnations of Jewish theism, which remains faithful to the tradition in its most fundamental issues. This latest current in Judaism found its precursor in Mordecai Kaplan.[1] As one might expect, Reconstructionism sets out precisely with the reconstruction of traditional Judaism, whilst relying on ideas inspired by the natural and social sciences. In this approach, it is not faith but knowledge that provides the criterion for an appropriate interpretation of the Bible. Without doubt, Reconstructionism transcended the boundaries of Jewish theism and situated itself in opposition to the latter. According to Kaplan, Judaism is a civilization rather than a religion it has been thus far. Religion is merely one of the numerous constituents of civilization and neither is it the most important,

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[1]   Mordecai M. Kaplan (1881–1983) was an American thinker and founder of the most recent Jewish denomination. Guided by pragmatism, functionalism, and naturalism, he carried out a reconstruction of traditional Judaism. His views were substantially influenced by the philosophy of John Dewey. Kaplan's seminal works include *Judaism as a Civilization*; *The Future of the American Jew*; *The Greater Judaism in Making*; *The Meaning of God*; *The Purpose and Meaning*; *The Religion of Ethical Nationhood*.

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essential or unconditional one. The Reconstructionists contend that one's approach to the Bible not only may, but even must, undergo changes just as the other component elements of the Jewish civilization. From now on, one would not have to be a theist in order to remain an adherent of Judaism, which is an utter novelty in the Jewish world. The Reconstructionists eschew the supernatural and consequently, do not recognize the divine origin of the Torah, the theory of creation, miracles, and eternal life in the beyond.[2] Their concept of holiness—which embodied the essence of God in traditional Judaism—presents a challenge to the contemporary Jewish thought and theological thought in general. Hence this paper attempts to explain the rationale and methodology of Kaplan's reconstruction of the traditional conception of "holiness" as well as to outline the implications of a notion thus revisited.[3]

In theology, "holiness" is the concept that most often and most felicitously describes God and what is intentionally associated with him. In the Hebrew Bible, "holiness" is denoted by two terms: *kadosh*, used exclusively with respect to God, and *kodesh*, which may refer to persons, objects, places, and times which are attributed a sacred dimension. This word reflects God's dissimilarity to the world and his nature as well as the character of everything which is to be isolated, separated and excluded from worldly creations and which is ascribed the supreme value. It is beyond doubt that in traditional Judaism, whether biblical or rabbinical, "holiness" was first and foremost inherent to God and expressed his principal attribute.[4] God alone was holy, whereas anything else could only be sanctified by God or hallowed in his name. By default, this quality was reserved exclusively for God. The holiness of people, objects, places and events was secondary and transitional, by virtue of attributing or transposing the transcendental (creative) reality to an immanent (created) reality, though not in the ontic but in the cultic and moral dimension.

1. Mordecai Kaplan's Concept of Holiness

Kaplan did not abandon the notion of sanctity but lent a new meaning to it, admitting that "it is folly to try to eliminate the concept of holiness from our vocabulary. It is the only accurate term for our deepest and most treasured experiences.

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[2] On Kaplan's life, work and views, see Cohen – Scult – Jospe, "Kaplan Mordecai," 751–753; Scult, "Mordecai M. Kaplan", 3–13; Hertzberg, "Introduction to the 1981 Edition," XIX–XXXV; Eisenstein, "Mordecai M. Kaplan", 253–279; Szczerbiński, *Postulat nie-osobowego Boga*.

[3] The issue of holiness and manifestations of desacralization in Jewish Reconstructionism are discussed extensively in: Szczerbiński, *Rekonstrukcjonistyczna desakralizacja judaizmu*.

[4] More broadly on that issue see: Jankowski, "Biblijne pojęcie świętości człowieka," 109–115; Jelonek, *Biblijne pojęcie sacrum*; Kepnes, "Holiness"; Kohler, "Holiness"; Krawczyk, "Biblijna koncepcja świętości," 345–362; Zając, "Judaizm jako religia," 46–60.

The moment any situation evokes from us the awareness that we have to do with something to which no other term than «sacred» is adequate, we are on the point of discovering God. In fact, we already sense His reality."[5] Nonetheless, he rejected the traditional understanding of holiness in Judaism and put forward an altogether new concept of sanctity. The underlying premise of this programmatic and revolutionary change was that each civilization recognizes the most important elements of its collective life as significant and designates them using the category of sanctity. By those means, people belonging to a given civilization may attain salvation understood as self-actualization.[6] In Reconstructionism, "the distinction between the holy and the profane, the sacred and the secular, is essentially the same as the distinction between the valuable and the worth-less, the important and the trivial, the significant and the meaningless. Holiness is that quality by virtue of which an object is felt to be of transcendent importance to us. Every civilization recognizes the existence of such sancta, or transcendently important objects."[7]

As Kaplan argued, it was virtually a scientific error to maintain that there exists an exceptional and singularly Jewish concept of God. The uniqueness and originality do not manifest themselves in the idea of God, but in the peculiar manner that the Jews exploit the idea of God. Specifically, it consisted on linking the faith in God, contingent on the general degree of cultural and social development, with the elements of Jewish tradition which were granted the highest rank of the sacred.[8] At this point, one is inclined to ask which civilizational components should be recognized as the most important, and thus holiness can be attributed to them. Considering the entirety of Kaplan's thought, the answer seems evident. In Reconstructionism, anything that serves to achieve the fullness of life, along with such values as truth, good, and beauty, is holy. "Religion has the one word which seeks to express that meaning in all its depth and mystery. That word is 'holiness.'"[9] This is because holiness is the sum of specific elements, the fullness of meaning, and the ultimate fulfillment. Not only does one need to identify these particular elements, but also realize that happiness is a larger whole, of which truth, good, and beauty are only fragments.[10]

The term that Kaplan employed—followed by all Jewish Reconstructionists—was "sancta," which was redefined. In general, the word *sancta* (sing. s*anctum*) is usually presumed to mean shrines or holy sites, and occasionally places where one works and rests.[11] In order to dissociate themselves completely from the traditional notion of holiness and underscore their own innovative approach, the Reconstructionists

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5   Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, 31.
6   Cf. Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, IX.
7   Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, 82.
8   Cf. Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, IX.
9   Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, 31.
10   Cf. Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, 31.
11   See "Sancta," *NSFK* 1294.

seldom use the Hebrew word *kadosh* in their writings and avoid its English equivalents: *holiness – holy*, *sacredness – sacred* or *sanctity – saint*. However, they usually use *these terms* when discussing traditional Judaism. Still, this is not a simple change of the term employed in traditional Judaism, but a substantial transformation of the very notion of holiness.

In Reconstructionism, sanctity expressed by "sancta" refers to life as a whole as opposed to its selected dimensions or aspects. "We invest places, persons and events with sacredness only as they contribute to our awareness of the sanctity of life as a whole, only as they symbolize the holiness that is in all things."[12] In its broadest sense, sanctity means fullness of life or happiness. The "sancta" will thus be related to anything that contributes to attaining that fullness. For Kaplan, attributing real sanctity to persons, objects and events was inappropriate and anachronic, which is why he warns one against an approach he calls philistine, whereby only certain places or occasions are sacred, while all other manifestations qualify as secular. As long as it persists, the attitude prevents one from departing from the primitive and magical concept of sanctity.[13] Consequently, the traditional understanding of holiness amounts to an expression of ignorance in the eyes of the Reconstructionists. "In our logical thinking we reject such notions as superstition, having been taught by our Prophets to associate the holiness of God with the thought that 'the whole earth is filled with His glory'. But our emotional reactions often revert to the attitude of primitive religion, and we then associate holiness only with persons, places and events which have been sanctified by traditional rituals."[14] What did Kaplan mean using the word "sancta"?

In Reconstructionism, "sancta" is a multi-vocal term denoting the most important and major elements of civilization, forms of identity as well as the guarantees of continuance and lastingness, an instrument of salvation, the collective soul or collective consciousness, the expression of the universal presence of God in the world or a manifestation of God in human life. Above all, "sancta" are the foremost elements of the Jewish civilization.[15]

Simon Noveck elucidates: "Every civilization identifies the most important elements of its life—objects, persons, places, events, days, customs—and invests them with sanctity. In the case of Judaism, these sanctified elements include the patriarchs, Moses, the prophets, the psalmists, the Torah, the Temple, the Sabbath, and the holidays."[16] Combined with other elements of civilization, sancta constitute folk religion. Kaplan himself asserted: "The religious element in a people's civilization is objectified in those institutions, places, historic events, popular heroes and all other

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12   Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, 32.
13   Cf. Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, 32.
14   Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, 32.
15   More on Judaism as a civilization see: Szczerbiński, *Postulat nie-osobowego Boga*, 96–107.
16   Noveck, "Kaplan and Milton Steinberg," 143.

objects of popular reverence to which superlative importance or sanctity is ascribed. *These* sancta, *the attitude toward life that they imply and the specific observances that they inspire, together constitute the religion of a people.*"[17] The observation that each civilization has its own sancta is crucial. The principal task of all who belong to a given civilization is to show concern and solicitude to keep their sancta alive. Since Judaism is a religious civilization, then it

> affirm[s] the truth that the Jewish people, under the leadership of its Lawgivers, Prophets and Sages, considered the chief function of its collective life to be the fostering of its sancta. It sought consciously to make its collective experience yield meaning for the enrichment of the individual Jew. That is how the entire life of the Jew came, in time, to be invested with *mitzvot* (divine commands), designed to impress on him the moral and spiritual values which had emerged from the process of Jewish living. The *berakot* (benedictions), which precede the performance of these *mitzvot*, imply that those *mitzvot* are intended to sanctify, that is to confer worth on, Jewish life.[18]

In Reconstructionism, sancta represent forms of preserving identity. Allan Lazaroff noted that Kaplan drew on sociology to develop a conviction "that peoples preserve their identity through their sancta, that is, through their sacred objects, literature, events, and persons."[19] It follows from Kaplan's arguments that without their sancta Jews are incapable of embracing, sustaining, and transmitting Jewish identity. To put it in a nutshell, Jewish identity hinges upon the Jewish sancta.

> Take away the traditional sancta from the Jewish people, and there is nothing left to account for its past. There remains a very small spiritual capital, indeed, on which to build a Jewish future. Changes will undoubtedly take place in the beliefs and practices that have hitherto constituted the Jewish religion, but they will be within the scope of the historical sancta. The Jewish religion will never suffer the fate of the Christian religion. It will never have to be replaced by a religion more native and integral to the social heritage of which it is a part.[20]

Kaplan had no doubt that regardless of the upshot of changes occurring in the spiritual life of other nations Jews would naturally retain the current degree of self-awareness and would constantly seek new means of expression for their historical sancta.[21]

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17 Kaplan, *The Future*, 46.
18 Kaplan, *The Future*, 46.
19 Lazaroff, "Kaplan and John Dewey," 180.
20 Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, 324–325.
21 According to Kaplan, the relation between the Jewish religion and the Jewish nation is in no way analogous to the relation between Christianity and the so-called Christian peoples. This is because the Christian religion is not native to any Christian nation and therefore, it was never able to become an organic

Of this we may be sure, because the Jews have a religion which was not imposed upon them from without; because the *nisus* to Jewish collective life in the diaspora, deriving mainly from the momentum of the past, functions chiefly through the specific objects, places, personalities and events around which the Jews have built up the mental associations of sanctity. Bearing in mind that historical religion is the sanctification of specific elements in the group life, and, inversely, that group life naturally gives rise to the sanctification of some of the specific elements in it, we cannot but conclude that historical religion without group life is empty of content, and is merely a way of speaking. *Group life which refuses to be merely a replica of a community of ants is bound to find expression in collective religion.*[22]

In his opinion, Jewish identity was still an ongoing and relevant phenomenon, owing its relevance to none other but the Jewish sancta:

The answer, which I derived from the relation of religion to group life, enabled me to discover what we really mean by a religion's maintaining its continuity, despite radical changes in its beliefs and practices. I became aware that, in every civilization or culture of a people, certain elements in it, principally persons, places, objects and texts are singled out as holy because of the power they are supposed to exert, from the standpoint of welfare and salvation. These are sancta of a civilization. They are transmitted from generation to generation. As a result of changes which a people undergoes in the course of time, the power or holiness of these sancta is accounted for differently, in keeping with the changes in general outlook and conception of God. These sancta, however, in remaining the same from generation to generation, convey a feeling of group sameness and continuity to the generations that cherish or revere them. Consequently, so long as we Jews hold sacred the same persons, places, objects, relationships, texts, special days etc., as did our ancestors, though for reasons different from theirs, we live by the same religion as they did. Moses, Eretz Yisrael, a Torah scroll, the covenant between God and Israel, Sacred Scripture, Yom Kippur are such sancta in Jewish religion. That principle, while solving the problem of continuity in Jewish religion amid the changes which it is bound to undergo, also helps to emphasize the fact that belonging to the Jewish people is a basic prerequisite to professing Jewish religion.[23]

The problem of the identity of being has been the object of intellectual inquiry since antiquity. The pre-Socratics wondered whether everything changed in a being or whether the change was only apparent. The Aristotelian theory of hylomorphism[24]

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component of any European culture. On the other hand, Judaism is an indigenous element of the Jewish people, and therefore, an essential and inalienable valuable element of the Jewish culture.

22   Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, 325.

23   Kaplan, "The Way I Have Come," 306–307.

24   Hylomorphism (also hylemorphism) is an Aristotelian notion according to which each substance is a being composed of two inseparably linked elements: the changeable matter and the immutable form. This theory made it possible to account for the identity of being despite its mutability.

resolved the dispute, demonstrating that each being comprises elements which are mutable and immutable, material and formal, essential and inessential. Consequently, being is the same, even though it is not the same. With respect to Judaism and any other religion for that matter, this means that religious identity is preserved when what is vital endures perpetually despite the changes that do occur in what is inessential. According to Kaplan, the sancta are the vehicle of what is vital for Judaism and ensure the preservation of identity for the benefit of the individual and the collective. The persistence of Judaism or its abeyance are, therefore, dependent on its sancta. At the same time, "[t]he discovery of the role which the sancta of a civilization play in maintaining the continuity of a religion has helped me formulate the position we Jews should take toward the ritual observances in our own religion. Ritual observances consist in specific actions to be performed, or formulas to be recited, in association with the sancta."[25] In traditional Judaism, all observances and ritual formulas are strictly defined by the Jewish law (*halakha*) which, construed as divine, is not subject to change. As maintained by Kaplan, this traditional preclusion of any change as far as the law is concerned is harmful to Judaism because it leads to neglecting the Jewish sancta.[26] "We should feel free to revise traditional rites and observances, and to create new ones [...] The highlighting of the same sancta would counteract the consequences of what might be too much latitude in manner of observance."[27]

Although the sancta are hallowed by the historical experience of the religious group and as such used to ensure the continuation of a given religion, the Reconstructionist held that a number of those sancta not only can but even should undergo modification:

> As a result of historic changes some of these sancta may, in time, become obsolete, and new sancta may come into being, but those that have played a dominant role throughout the ages in shaping the ideals of the group will continue to be revered and to be invested with new meanings as a result of new experience. The Sabbath and Holy Days, the *Torah, Prophets* and *Holy Writings*, the Synagogue, the Hebrew language and Eretz Yisrael can retain their sanctity for the Jew, even without recourse to dogma or restriction of free thought, because of their demonstrable value to Jewish life.[28]

As Kaplan himself admitted, the concept of sancta enabled him to transition from the traditionally understood revealed religion to a naturalist paradigm, because the sancta became the object of naturalistic reinterpretation in Reconstructionism.

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25 Kaplan, "The Way I Have Come," 307.
26 Cf. Kaplan, "The Way I Have Come," 307–308.
27 Kaplan, "The Way I Have Come," 308.
28 Kaplan, *Questions Jews Ask*, 162–163.

The concept of sancta, more particularly, permits the change from revelational to naturalist religion by the reinterpretation of the sancta in naturalistic terms. One does not, for example, have to believe that God actually rested on the seventh day after six days of creation in order to experience the religious value of the Sabbath. As one of the sancta of Jewish life, the meaning of the Sabbath can be reinterpreted in terms that enable it to retain its sacredness for us, even though we no longer accept the Biblical version of its origin. The very idea of reinterpretation, which has gained wide currency, is a contribution of Reconstructionism.[29]

The reinterpretation of Judaism viewed as a civilization presupposes the reinterpretation of the Jewish sancta. The main goal of all Reconstructionist efforts is to preserve Judaism, even at the expense of the inviolability of the sancta. As they argue, the traditional understanding of sanctity does not serve to sustain the vitality of Judaism.

A living civilization is, of necessity, a changing civilization, but in changing itself it does not lose its identity any more than does an individual in passing from childhood to maturity. The same principle applies to the religious aspect of a civilization. To make revitalization possible, the sancta of religion must be reinterpreted in each generation so that their meanings are relevant to the needs of the generation. *Tradition must not be a source of authority*, imposing restrictions on the creativity of later generations, *but a source of wisdom and morale awakening new creative powers*. When sancta have become meaningless, they cease, in the nature of the case, to be sancta. But this need not trouble us as long as a people lives and creates, for then it produces new sancta. To keep religion vital, religious thought must be free.[30]

The reinterpretation of the traditional notion of holiness also resulted from a novel concept of salvation, which was reduced to achieving happiness in the imminent world, here and now. According to the Reconstructionists, a certain stage in the development of Judaism became a Jewish memory.

Later a change came over religion, due to the altered conception of salvation, which thereafter was regarded as attainable only in the life after death. What happened to the sancta of the first stage or to those items of holiness which had to be reckoned with as a means of obtaining rain, conquering enemies, enjoying prosperity? Were other sancta discovered as in need of being reckoned with, and therefore as constituting the conditions of other-worldly salvation? Not at all. What actually happened was that the original sancta, or the conditions of salvation as conceived in the first stage of religion, were given meanings which fitted them into the other-worldly pattern of thought. They were thus able to

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29   Kaplan, *Questions Jews Ask*, 487–488.
30   Kaplan, *The Future*, 48.

continue as means of salvation, though it was a different kind of salvation of which they then came to be the means.[31]

Once reinterpreted, the traditionally understood holiness would become relevant, imbued with vital energy and desirable.

> As Jews, we feel impelled to maintain the continuity and growth of the Jewish people. There can be no ultimate good or salvation for us, either as individuals or as a group, unless we are permitted to express ourselves creatively as Jews. The conditions essential to our salvation must therefore *include* those which enable us to experience continuity with the Jewish past, as well as make possible a Jewish future. That continuity cannot be maintained without actually reliving the ancient experience of the will to live abundantly. There is no other possible way of reliving that experience than by giving the ancient Jewish sancta a new lease on life, which can be done by reinterpretation. Those elements in the traditional sancta which can still be proved to have an intrinsic connection with ultimate good or salvation, as we now conceive it, should be singled out and treated as social and mental requirements without salvation is for us impossible.[32]

It needs to be noted that when approached from a pragmatic standpoint, the sancta include only those elements of the Jewish civilization which reflect existential needs of the human and serve as symbols of individual or collective yearnings.[33]

Throughout the history of Judaism, there were certain events, persons, places and objects which, for pragmatic reasons, were incorporated in the trove of the sancta. Consequently, the individual perceived the history of their group as their own. Kaplan asserted that the sancta were subject to repeated interpretations which in their turn became the ideology of the group and gave meaning to human existence. A uniform and unvarying interpretation (ideology) of the Jewish sancta served as an interpretive yardstick for the individual life and the requisite of salvation.[34] For the Reconstructionists, the arrangement is no longer tenable because contemporary Judaism lacks one shared ideology and therefore, one uniform understanding of the sacred is absent. They suggest their own interpretation, which enables the historical sancta to retain their status as the sources of ethical incentive and spiritual fortitude for the adherents of Judaism, even though they may espouse distinct philosophies of life. They claim:

> the sense of unity and even of like-mindedness is not contingent upon the sameness of interpretation, but upon the sameness of the constellation of realities interpreted. The latter sameness is far more unifying than agreement in abstract generalizations. If Jews will

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31   Kaplan, *The Future*, 179.
32   Kaplan, *The Future*, 179–180.
33   Cf. Kaplan, *The Future*, 180.
34   Cf. Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, 519.

thrill to the sancta, or constellation of historical realities which figure in their tradition, and maintain those realities as centers of ethical and spiritual reference, no matter how far apart they are in their views about life – they will be sufficiently united to function in their collective capacity as an instrument of salvation to the individual.[35]

2. Sancta as a Constitutive Element in Any Civilization

Kaplan's assertion that each civilization has its own religion as well as its own sancta is particularly important. In his view, Judaism does not surpass other religions nor are its sancta superior. Even so, it is the sancta which lend singularity to the Jewish religion.

> The difference between Jewish religion and all others does not consist so much in the uniqueness of its conception of God, as in the uniqueness of its sancta. Loyalty to Judaism need, therefore, involve no pretensions to religious superiority. Jewish religion differs from the other religions not in being *unlike* them, for they too, have sancta that are products of Jewish historic experience and not of the historic experience of other branches of human society. *We are faithful to Jewish religion, not because we have chosen it as the best of all religions, but because it is ours, the only religion we have, an inseparable part of our collective personality as a people. If some of us find that religion unacceptable in the form in which it has come down from the past, there is nothing but inertia to stop us from making it acceptable.*[36]

One of the well-entrenched Reconstructionist convictions is that not only Judaism but all religions help their believers to experience the reality of God through sancta.[37] Followers of particular religions "may have very similar conceptions of God and still be adherents of different religions, because of the different sancta through which they experience God. Each group of sancta represents a distinct culture or civilization. Hence what permanently differentiates the Jewish religion from other religions is the fact that it represents the Jewish culture or civilization and articulates the self-consciousness of the Jewish People."[38]

As can be seen, each religion is possessed of its own sancta, which may happen to be identical, similar or utterly different. Nonetheless, all sancta perform the same

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35   Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, 519–520.
36   Kaplan, *The Future*, 47.
37   For the Christians, such sancta include, e.g. the person of Jesus, the cross and the books of the New Testament. On the other hand, the Prophet Mohammed, the crescent moon, the Blackstone of Aqaba and the Ramadan are some of the foremost sancta of Islam.
38   Kaplan, *Questions Jews Ask*, 175.

function and have the same value within their proper religion. The sancta of each religious community quite naturally mean considerably more for its members than for any other group. Whether the sancta of a given group are more ethical or more valuable than their counterparts in any other group is irrelevant in the Reconstructionist paradigm. Since all religions strive for the salvation of the community by means of peculiar sancta, the assumption that a religion is the only religion or the sole true faith is untenable in Reconstructionism. "No religion can be absolutely more or less true than another."[39] Each religion exists within the framework of its civilization and has no need to justify itself nor prove its own superiority or the superiority of its sancta.[40] Specific sancta are the underpinning of the identity of a particular religion and enable it to last over numerous generations, even though the community witnesses changes in their lifestyle and mindset. The Reconstructionists take equality of all religions for granted, which is why they reject the proposition that any religion eclipses the others, making no exception even for Judaism. As they argue, Jewish religion can no longer claim superiority on the grounds of exclusive prerogative to divine revelation. It is exceptional insofar as its own cultural patterns are exceptional. Judaism is "different" from other religions but it is not "better" or "superior."[41] Hence the sancta of Judaism are merely distinct from the sancta of other religions but do not outweigh them in terms of quality or importance.

Kaplan drew attention to the universality of the traditional Jewish sancta, which were present in other religions. At the same time, he alleged that Christianity had appropriated Jewish sancta and asserted their exclusivity; certain sancta had originally been the foundation of the Judaic identity only.

> That does not militate against their becoming a source of universal values. Thus the Patriarchs, Moses, the Prophets, the Psalmists are all sancta of Judaism. But we Jews have no desire to monopolize them. On the contrary, we are happy when the rest of the world finds in them a source of guidance and inspiration. But the Church is entirely unwarranted in claiming for itself these and other sancta of Judaism, and regarding them as misunderstood or desecrated by the Jews who reject the interpretation which Christianity gives to them.[42]

In Reconstructionism, sharing sancta is considered possible, even recommended. It is, however, inadmissible that any religion should seek to impose or coerce the adoption of its sancta.[43] "Even by bringing only psychological pressure to bear on minorities to adopt the sancta of the majority group and to discard their own,

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39 Goldsmith, "Kaplan and Henry Nelson Wieman," 215.
40 Cf. Goldsmith, "Kaplan and Henry Nelson Wieman," 215; Kaplan, *Judaism in Transition*, 282.
41 Cf. Weisberg, "Theory of Religion," 188.
42 Kaplan, *Questions Jews Ask*, 428.
43 Cf. Kaplan, *Questions Jews Ask*, 479.

the adherents of a missionary religion sin against that very voluntarism which is the one aspect of Reconstructionism."[44]

As constantly reiterated by Kaplan, religions do not differ from one another in their degree of truth but in their collective sancta, which result from the particular experiences of a given community and which are approached as revealed by God or revealing God. From that standpoint, no religion can legitimately claim superiority over others. Moreover, continuing adherence to one's religion does not necessarily translate into the permanence of its sancta. When the followers of some religion notice that the traditional teachings have become obsolete or inapplicable, they do not need to abandon their religion, but continue to celebrate their sancta; the only action required is to reinterpret and reassess the sancta of their religion in line with the scientific achievements or truths they acknowledge to be objective or universal.[45]

For the Reconstructionists, Judaism is more than a religion: a religious civilization which has its own sancta. Living in two civilization, the Jews of the diaspora build their identity based on the sancta of both civilizations. As Kaplan explained:

> The history of the Jewish religion points to the truth that *the religion which invests with universal import the* sancta *of the civilization in which it functions has most survival value*. A religion does so when it enables these sancta to elicit loyalty not merely to one's people, but also loyalty to what is regarded as the deepest and holiest of human interests [...]. If the institutions of the conquering civilization can satisfy as many human interests as those which the conquered civilization had satisfied, the individual will transfer not only his political but also spiritual allegiance to the conquering civilization. In such a case, the conquered civilization is doomed. *The secret of the survival of Judaism in the face of the successive of Canaanite, Babylonian, Greek, Roman and Arabic civilizations is the fact that in all these epochs the Jewish religion invested the* sancta *of the Jewish people with such universal, ethical and spiritual significance that the issue involved was felt to be not only the saving of the Jewish people, but saving of all that made human life worth living.*[46]

The American Jews cherish the sancta of Judaism as well as the sancta which became hallowed in the course of American history. The sancta of the American civilization include, e.g. the Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, the Liberty Bell, the Arlington National Cemetery, the stars and stripes of the national flag.

> But the value or sacredness of such holy objects is not inherent in them. The flag is but a piece of colored cloth, the *Sefer Torah* a piece of parchment with ink-marks on it. It is life

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44   Kaplan, *Questions Jews Ask*, 430.
45   Cf. Kaplan, *Questions Jews Ask*, 431.
46   Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, 333–334.

or relationship to those purposes that spell life's meaning for us, that gives value to these objects. Their holiness is derivative and depends on our faith in the supreme value of life itself, in the holiness of life. If life itself is worthless, no object on earth can have any value. When religion ascribes holiness to God, it is saying in effect that life as a whole, the life of the universe of which our lives are but a part, is the supreme value from which all others are derived. The criterion for the sacredness of any object is its contribution to the enhancement of life, to our sense of its worth and importance.[47]

Kaplan effected a religious interpretation of the major values of American life, to which he assigned the category of the sacred. For the Reconstructionists, those particular sancta include the events, persons, institutions and other objects celebrated by the Americans, because they are considered ideas and ideals of superior importance to Americans who aspire to accomplish the highest goals of human life. It seems that Kaplan found American democracy to be a singular kind of American religion, stating as follows: "And since all that a People regards as holy represents its religion, and since God is manifest as the Power that gives human life its sanctity or supreme worth, *the Faith America is the sum of all those spiritual attitudes which cluster about the American* sancta *and give them their significance.*"[48]

Kaplan was convinced that the Jewish sancta could contribute to consolidating democracy in America to ultimately foster the emergence of a single, universal American religion with its universal sancta. He asserted explicitly:

I have deemed it necessary to look to the American people and its civilization for moral and spiritual values with no less eagerness than to the Jewish people. The role which sancta play in a civilization in giving to that civilization a religion, a consciousness of its destiny, and an awareness of its having to be a means of salvation to those who live by it, afford us American Jews an opportunity to make an important contribution to American life. We should single out the heroes, the events, the texts, the relationships, the significant days, that help to fashion in the American people not only a common consciousness but also a common conscience, and interpret those American sancta from the standpoint of democracy as a way of life and as a means to salvation [...]. By stressing democracy in that spirit, we would contribute to the emergence of a religion for all Americans. American civilization would thus acquire a spiritual significance analogous for us Jews to that of Jewish civilization, and for Christian to that of Christian civilization. That it would do without in the least impugning either the Jewish or Christian social heritage.[49]

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47 Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, 83.
48 Kaplan, *Questions Jews Ask*, 482.
49 Kaplan, "The Way I have Come," 317.

Kaplan was aware that the attempt to forge one single American religion comprising a set of universal sancta that the community would arrive at, was highly likely to face misunderstanding and opposition, because such an aspiration goes against the notion that only one specific religion holds the key to salvation, solely and exclusively. The Reconstructionist suggestion that one can follow two religions simultaneously—the Jewish or Christian religion on the one hand, and the American religion, on the other—verges on the absurd.[50] Yet, Kaplan was convinced that "on calmer consideration, however, the proposal calling for the accentuation of American sancta, and for placing them in a context of democracy raised to a religion and related to the belief in God will be seen as a much needed development in American life, and as an inescapable one, if democracy is to become a faith to live by as well as one die for."[51]

In Reconstructionism, sancta are construed as an expression of the universal presence of God in the world and a manifestation of the divine in human existence. According to Kaplan, the idea of God functions as an organic acceptance of certain elements human life and in their environment, or acceptance of reality as a whole in relation to the group, which ultimately promotes self-actualization or salvation. That organic approval is expressed in the adjective "holy" which describes each object that one approaches with the highest reverence.[52]

3. Holiness: The Expression of the Fullness of Humanity

In Kaplan's opinion, before the human was capable of formulating the idea of "God," they became aware that there were elements in their surroundings, specific objects, places, and persons whose presence was necessary to satisfy certain human needs. Those elements were attributed a power which, as one believed, could be used to one's benefit by repeating certain facts and formulas whose nature was virtually magical. As their self-awareness grew, humans became increasingly conscious of the significance of the clan or the tribe to which they belong. This, in turn, reinforced the notion that the magical practices in which one engaged are insufficient while the dependence of the individual on the group became overriding.

> As a consequence the indispensable elements in the life and environment of the group acquired that additional significance for him which he tried to convey by viewing them and conducting himself toward them as holy. With that the notion of godhood began to emerge, for *psychologically, the notion of godhood is the precipitate of the notion of holiness.*

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50   Cf. Kaplan, "The Way I have Come," 318.
51   Kaplan, "The Way I Have Come," 318.
52   Cf. Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, 317.

A holy being is synonymous with a divine being. As man developed further, he extended the domain of holiness to include not only visible or picturable objects, events and persons, but also customs, laws, social relationships, truths and ideals.[53]

In Reconstructionism, "worth" and "significance" refer to the same kind of psychological response as holiness does.

In Kaplan's repeatedly emphasized statement, each religion has its objects, persons, places and events which are considered sacred or constitute the supreme value in the collective consciousness of its believers.

This truth is sufficiently recognizable when we deal with ancient religions, each of which had its own sacred trees, waters, stones and mountains, but escapes us when we deal with the great historical religions [...]. The beginnings of the Jewish religion are marked by rivalry between Canaanitish sancta and the sancta which Israelites brought with them from the wilderness, between the bull image and the ark of YHWH, between the local sanctuaries and the sanctuary at Jerusalem. In the very process of upholding the claims of the Israelitish sancta there emerged the great spiritual conceptions and moral ideals which have rendered them of universal import.[54]

Kaplan noted the very fact of the Samaritans demanding a shrine on the Mount Gerizim sufficed to bring forth believers of a religion different than Jewish. Similarly, Christianity split away from the Jewish religion by adding the person of Jesus to other Jewish sancta, although the early Christians did continue to perform Jewish rites, accepted all beliefs and respected all sancta of Biblical Judaism.[55]

"The God-idea may remain with him purely as a state of mind, and does not have to be externalized [...]. Concretely speaking, this means that a group religion is least of all a *philosophy* of life. Its function primarily is to invest with sanctity not life in general, but specific objects, persons, places, events, days, etc., and specific codes of law, customs and morals."[56] The idea of God epitomizes everything which has been found to be holy. For the Reconstructionists, it is undeniable that something in the human nature compels them to seek personal and social salvation.

By identifying that aspect of reality with God, we are carrying out in modern times the implications of the conception that man is created in God's image. For such an identification

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[53] Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, 318.

[54] Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, 319.

[55] As claimed by Kaplan, the Church made a correct pronouncement stating that the first day rather than the seventh is holy. If the Church observed the same day, then Christianity would not have been sufficiently different from the Jewish religion. See: Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, 318.

[56] Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, 319–320.

implies that *there is something divine in human personality, in that it is the instrument through which the creative life of the world effects the evolution of the human* race. The corollary of the thought of man's likeness to God has always been the sense of the sacredness of human personality, of its inherent worth.[57]

Conversely, anything that does not lead to holiness, which diminishes likeness to God, impoverishes human faculties, which constitutes the proclamation of life and deprives it of fullness and meaning amounts to sin.[58]

Essentially, Kaplan does not speak of the human soul but of the "spirit of man" or "spirit of holiness," thanks to which any correlation with God is viable at all. That human spirit is nothing else than an "instrument of holiness"[59] and, as Kaplan believed, has been personified as Logos. However, the personification was unwarranted, because God, the human and Logos were erroneously linked by constitutive partnership, in which each has a special function to perform. Thus, holiness became the function of Logos, the Holy Spirit in other words. Meanwhile, monotheistic holiness defines the relationship between God and the human.[60] For Kaplan the Bible usually associates the "spirit of holiness" with the human rather than God. The notion is employed with reference to God on mere three occasion, twice in Isaiah and once in the Psalms. As deduced by Kaplan, in Isaiah, "spirit" is synonymous with God: "But they rebelled, and grieved his holy spirit" (Isa 63:10), whereas "spirit of holiness" is only applicable to a collective being, a group which forms a community. "Of no prophet nor of the Messiah is it ever said that God put His spirit *into Him*."[61] Given that holiness or the spirit of holiness manifests in ethical conduct, it cannot be attributed to an individual person. Holiness can only be in evidence in the interaction between people, and therefore the most valuable modes and forms of collective existence are approached by Kaplan as "manifestation of God and human life."[62]

As regards the Psalms, its verses clearly indicate a connection between the "spirit of holiness" and the ethical dimension, while "[a]gainst you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight" (Ps 51:4) intimates the awareness that all sins against one fellow human are sins against God. The psalm reveals the true meaning of "spirit," which denotes the power of human renewal—the renewal of oneself—by virtue of which sin is overcome. "The spirit of holiness belongs to God and man in common. It protects man against the power of sin. Sin can never altogether destroy

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57   Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, 89.
58   Cf. Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, 90.
59   Cf. Kaplan, *The Purpose and Meaning*, 116.
60   Cf. Kaplan, *The Purpose and Meaning*, 116.
61   Kaplan, *The Purpose and Meaning*, 117.
62   Kaplan, *The Future*, 174.

the spirit of holiness in man."[63] As long as a person interacts with others, they are constrained by a sense of moral responsibility.

In Reconstructionism, holiness refers to the divine element which has been inculcated in human by God. Thanks to the spirit of holiness, that universal call to sanctity (Lev 11:44) is extended to each and every person. "In sanctifying God, man becomes holy."[64] In a sense, the spirit is tantamount to creating God, while the moral responsibility is a manifestation of divine creativity. "God and man remain distinct in the correlation: man sanctifies God and God sanctifies man. Common to both is the process of sanctification."[65]

One of the Reconstructionist premises is that the bond between God and human in Judaism operates by virtue of their logical co-dependence, a mutual correlation as opposed to a mystical union. It is asserted that the Torah speaks of holiness reified through "statutes and judgments," whereas in the "spirit of holiness" in the Prophets and the Psalms describes the ethical spirit or, to use Kantian categories, the practical reason. "Due to the spirit of holiness, man emerges as an individual. Not spirit (as used in term *the Holy Ghost*), but the spirit of holiness makes man; only ethical reason, not reason as such (in the Aristotelian sense of the term), has this catalytic power. Monotheism differentiates the human from the non-human as the special concern of ethical reason."[66] It was evident for Kaplan that only monotheistic approach to ethical issues was effective enough to close the door to any mysticism. It is only proper conduct which determines whether one is worthy of the spirit of holiness; no other criterion exists. Absence of rational knowledge cannot incite the inner spirit of holiness, which is expressed in the human bond with God.[67]

In Reconstructionism, the concept of the "spirit of holiness" is free of any associations with mysticism. The latter is purely an individual experience, whereas holiness which Kaplan identified with ethical conduct, spans interpersonal relations.[68] The most important conclusion drawn from the Reconstructionist understanding of the notion "spirit of holiness" is that metaphysical knowledge of God is irrelevant, but knowing him in the ethical manner is crucial. This derives from the functional approach, in which action rather than knowledge is the measure of authenticity. "All nations of holiness, whether theoretical, mystical or cultic, other than the one which identifies it with human conduct, have a nimbus of idolatry. In monotheism, holiness is essentially a human attribute."[69] Kaplan is convinced that when man sanctifies himself through righteousness or simply proper contact, he notices the holiness of

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63   Kaplan, *The Purpose and Meaning*, 117.
64   Kaplan, *The Purpose and Meaning*, 117.
65   Kaplan, *The Purpose and Meaning*, 118.
66   Kaplan, *The Purpose and Meaning*, 119.
67   Cf. Kaplan, *The Purpose and Meaning*, 119–120.
68   Cf. Kaplan, *The Purpose and Meaning*, 120.
69   Kaplan, *The Purpose and Meaning*, 117.

God. It is also in this light that he interpreted the biblical verse: "the Holy God shows himself holy by righteousness" (Isa 5:16). In his view, the Torah negates all forms of mistagogy and ascetic practices as ways to attain holiness.[70]

The Reconstructionist holiness is relational as opposed to personal, which is why the "spirit of holiness" is not a separate entity in the manner of the third person in the Trinity, but "the spirit" that manifests itself in the world by virtue of one's ethical conduct. "Man should not permit himself to worship the spirit of holiness as though it were a deity (the Holy Ghost). No human being can be holy except by virtue of the holiness of his behavior toward his fellow-man. 'Holiness' and «spirit» supplement each other. 'Holiness' helps us to realize that 'spirit' is an aspect of conduct, and «spirit» helps us to realize that 'holiness' is an aspect of ethical reason."[71]

Conclusions

Clearly, the concept of holiness advanced by Mordecai Kaplan is an expression of the fullness of humanity, not an essence of the personal God. For the Reconstructionists, this is more of an anthropological than a theological category. From the standpoint of tradition, such a concept of holiness leads to desacralization of Judaism, which may primarily be seen in the desacralization of God, the Torah, the Chosen People and the Sabbath. Based on the conducted analyses, it may be concluded that Kaplan's proposal—though exceedingly interesting and spectacular—does entail desacralization. The Reconstructionist revaluation of Judaism has its specific corollaries. The traditional rituals and the functioning of the Jewish religion remain unchanged but their meaning undergoes considerable modification. Kaplan tried to find a modern "counterpart" (equivalent) to each of the key ideas in Judaism, including sanctity. It is simply construed as a transcendent importance or sublimity. People and the world are sacred in the sense that they possess a sublime, even cosmic and ultimate significance, and goal. Judaism is sacred inasmuch as it contributes to the accomplishment of the human goal understood as a complete fulfillment in this world. One may have the impression that Reconstructionism involved a complete reversal of the traditional values. What was merely a means in Judaism became the end, whereas the end became the means. What used to lead to sanctity became sanctity itself, the touchstone and the foundation of which is not found in God but in the human. It appears that instead of sanctifying the secular—as in traditional Judaism—the Reconstructionists profane that which was considered sacred. Even

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70   Cf. Kaplan, *The Purpose and Meaning*, 121.
71   Kaplan, *The Purpose and Meaning*, 121–122.

allowing for the divergences of views and positions, which is normal in Judaism, Kaplan's concept of holiness represents a genuine revolution in contemporary Jewish thought.

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From *Familiaris Consortio* to *Amoris Laetitia*: Pope Francis' Renewed Vision of the Pastoral Care of Families

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Abstract: The anthropological, cultural, social and religious changes taking place over the last decades have strongly influenced the shape of marriage and family life. By reading "the signs of the times," the Church undertakes a reflection on issues related to marriage and the family. In the dimension of the Catholic Church, this reflection is made especially during synods of bishops which yield apostolic exhortations presenting renewed visions of pastoral care. Regarding marriage and family, they are found in John Paul II's exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* and Francis' exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. This article addresses the issue connected with mutual relationships between the pastoral concepts contained in these documents. Its presentation revolves around three parts which correspond to the methodology of pastoral-theological reflection: evangelical discernment of the situation of marriage and the family (cairological premise), establishment of pastoral paradigms (criteriological premise) and directions of pastoral solutions (pastoral-praxeological conclusion). The article shows both *Amoris Laetitia*'s continuation of the concept of pastoral care of families presented in *Familiaris Consortio* and the originality of thoughts and change of pastoral paradigms in the teaching of Pope Francis.

Keywords: *Familiaris Consortio*, *Amoris Laetitia*, pastoral care, marriage, family, pastoral paradigms

The teaching of the Church on the pastoral care of families, which is the subject of these analyses, is included in the post-synodal apostolic exhortations. Therefore, it is substantially related to the synods of bishops that preceded them and is the fruit of a synodal reflection on the mission of the Church in the contemporary world.[1] "The *convenire in unum* around the Bishop of Rome – as taught by Francis – is indeed an event of grace, in which episcopal collegiality is made manifest in a path of spiritual and pastoral discernment."[2] Thus, both synodal discernment and exhortations resulting from it have the character of pastoral reflection, or more precisely, pastoral-theological reflection.[3] This reflection includes both the discernment of the cultural and social situation and doctrinal-normative reflection, as well as the formulation

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[1] VI Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, September–October 1980 (*Familiaris Consortio*); III Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, October 2014 and XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, October 2015 (*Amoris Laetitia*).

[2] Francis, "Address."

[3] Cf. Rozkrut, "Znaczenie Synodu," 235–239.

of praxeological-pastoral conclusions.[4] Pastoral reflection concerns the daily growth of the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit through "the word, sacraments and the service of love." It shows faith-derived "principles and criteria for the pastoral action of the Church in history [...]. Among these principles and criteria, one that is especially important is that of the evangelical discernment of the socio-cultural and ecclesial situation in which the particular pastoral action has to be carried out" (*PDV* 57).[5] This study will feature a comparative analysis of exhortations *Familiaris Consortio* and *Amoris Laetitia* in the pastoral-theological context. In this light, it will be possible to clearly observe the development of the Church's Magisterium concerning the pastoral practice of the Church in the area of the pastoral care of families.

1. Discernment of the Socio-Cultural and Ecclesial Situation

Both *Familiaris Consortio* and *Amoris Laetitia* perceive the need for the discernment of the current cultural, social and ecclesial situation "to understand the situations within which marriage and the family are lived today" (*FC* 4). The purpose of this discernment, however, is not a sociological description, but understanding "the signs of the times." God's calls are also contained "in historical events," as noted by both documents (cf. *FC* 4; *AL* 31).[6] However, they formulate the purpose of this discernment slightly differently. John Paul II points to the need to show the truth about marriage and the family. He states that "the discernment effected by the Church becomes the offering of an orientation in order that the entire truth and the full dignity of marriage and the family may be preserved and realized," because "it is the task of the apostolic ministry to ensure that the Church remains in the truth of Christ" (*FC* 5). In relation to it, he speaks about the need for an "evangelical discernment" of modern family life (cf. *FC* 4). A sociological diagnosis is therefore carried out only in order to find out to what extent the present shape of family life deviates from God's thought and will to correctly determine "an orientation in order that the entire truth and the full dignity of marriage and the family may be preserved and realized" (*FC* 5).[7] On the other hand, Francis, not forgetting the need to present the Church's integral teaching on marriage, states that today "what we need is a more responsible and generous effort to present the reasons and motivations for choosing marriage and the family, and in this way to help men and women better to respond to the grace that God offers them" (*AL* 35).

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4   Cf. Bajda, "Etyczny profil," 7.
5   Cf. Polak, *Od teologii do eklezjologii*, 17–19.
6   Cf. Faggioni, "Teologia małżeństwa," 136.
7   Cf. Zuberbier, "Znaczenie doktrynalne adhortacji," 71–72.

Presenting the situation of marriage and the family in the contemporary world, John Paul II points to "bright spots and shadows for the family today,"[8] and Francis, in turn, to "the experiences and challenges of families."[9] In the description of this situation, they devote most attention to the difficulties and threats that result from contemporary anthropological and cultural changes and from the living conditions in which the call to life in marriage is realized.[10] John Paul II and Francis see the situation of marriage and the family in a similar way, which presents itself "as an interplay of light and darkness" (cf. *FC* 6). However, in this description of the situation, the negative aspect definitely prevails, i.e. an indication of threats to marriage and family life by contemporary anthropological, cultural and social changes.[11]

As the main cause of the negative aspects of changes in the area of marriage and family life, John Paul II and Francis point to the incorrect understanding of the use of freedom. "At the root of these negative phenomena there frequently lies a corruption of the idea and the experience of freedom" (*FC* 6), or confusing genuine freedom "with the idea that each individual can act arbitrarily" (*AL* 34). Other cultural phenomena are described in a similar way, which on the one hand are an opportunity to improve the quality of interpersonal relationships in marriage, promote the dignity of women or responsible procreation, but on the other hand, they become the cause of disturbing symptoms of degradation of some fundamental values for marriage and family life (cf. *FC* 6). For Francis, the individualization and personalism of life is a chance for "authenticity as opposed to mere conformity [...], but if misdirected it can foster attitudes of constant suspicion, fear of commitment, self-centredness and arrogance" (*AL* 33).

Understanding the situation of marriage and the family in the contemporary world presented in *Familiaris Consortio* and *Amoris Laetitia* also has some differences which indicate the development of pastoral and theological thought regarding the pastoral care of families. First of all, one can notice a marked difference in the size of the description. While John Paul II shows this situation essentially in one point (cf. *FC* 6), Francis devotes to it as many as twenty-six points (cf. *AL* 31–57). Such a considerable size of the description is due, among other things, to the fact that Francis takes much more account of the contribution of the Synod Fathers, who "examined the situation of families worldwide" (cf. *AL* 31) and the teaching of bishops from local Churches: Spain (*AL* 32), Korea (*AL* 42), Mexico (*AL* 51), Colombia (*AL* 57). However, the difference here is not only quantitative. Devoting much more space to the analysis of anthropological, cultural and social conditions is also associated with a more detailed and in-depth description of various phenomena and their

8   John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, part I.
9   Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, chapter II.
10   Cf. Yastremskyy, "Wyzwania duszpasterstwa rodzin," 285–293.
11   Cf. Yastremskyy, "Wolne związki," 124–126.

impact on marriage and the family, as well as with searching for the sources and causes of these phenomena. Woven into the description are also pastoral challenges which result from reading these phenomena as "the signs of the times."[12]

Another difference in the pastoral discernment of the situation results from its extension to aspects that are not present in *Familiaris Consortio*. Among them, a special place is occupied by the analysis of the influence of the Church's activities in the area of the pastoral care of families on the contemporary understanding and practice of married life. Here, Francis points to the need of "a healthy dose of self-criticism" (cf. *AL* 36). He draws attention to various pastoral errors that have become one of the causes of the current state of affairs. Among them he lists: reducing the purpose of marriage solely to procreation, insufficient support of young spouses, presenting a far too abstract and artificial theological ideal of marriage which is far removed from the concrete situations, stressing doctrinal, bioethical and moral issues without encouraging openness to grace (cf. *AL* 36–37). Such a situation created a pastoral attitude of defensiveness and a negative assessment of the world, resulted in focusing on errors and inappropriate situations, and led to a clearly negative assessment of anthropological and cultural changes and distance from marriages and families (cf. *AL* 38).[13]

The pastoral discernment of *Amoris Laetitia* has also developed and deepened such issues as: the impact of migration on marriage and family life, feminism and violence against women, and the question of *gender*. These issues were signaled in John Paul II's document, but the anthropological and cultural changes that have taken place since *Familiaris Consortio* was published required a wider reference to them in pastoral understanding. John Paul II lists "the families of migrant workers" as one of difficult situations. In this situation, the families of migrants "should be able to find a homeland everywhere in the Church. This is a task stemming from the nature of the Church, as being the sign of unity in diversity" (cf. *FC* 77). Francis sees migration very clearly as "the sign of the times." This phenomenon affects in various ways "whole populations in different parts of the world" (cf. *AL* 46). It is connected, on the one hand, with the natural historical movement of peoples and, on the other hand, with forced migrations as a result of wars, persecution, poverty and social injustice. Such a situation "needs a specific pastoral programme addressed not only to families that migrate but also to those family members who remain behind" (*AL* 46).

Among the positive aspects of social changes related to marriage and family life, John Paul II and Francis mention promoting the dignity of women and a clearer recognition of women's rights (cf. *FC* 6; *AL* 54). Francis, however, made it clearer that in some countries there is still "much to be done" on this matter. This is especially true of shameful violence that is sometimes used against women, domestic abuse and

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12   Cf. Nadbrzeżny, "Sens i wartość sakramentu," 32–40.
13   Cf. Barth, "Amoris laetitia," 29–30.

various forms of enslavement. This violence can be verbal, physical or sexual. Sometimes it is expressed in "the reprehensible genital mutilation of women practiced in some cultures, but also of their lack of equal access to dignified work and roles of decision-making" (*AL* 54). Francis considers the diagnosis that makes feminine emancipation responsible for these problems wrong. "This argument, however, is not valid – he says – it is false, untrue, a form of male chauvinism" (*AL* 54). While not all forms of feminism can be considered appropriate, the tendency to more explicitly recognize the dignity of women and their rights is certainly the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work. For there are still many areas where past inequalities have not been overcome. This also applies to the specific area of family life. In it, "a widespread social and cultural tradition has considered women's role to be exclusively that of wife and mother, without adequate access to public functions which have generally been reserved for men" (*FC* 23). Various forms of discrimination against women require that "vigorous and incisive pastoral action be taken by all to overcome them definitively so that the image of God that shines in all human beings without exception may be fully respected" (*FC* 24).

Another new issue by which *Amoris Laetitia* broadens the pastoral discernment contained in *Familiaris Consortio* is the issue of various forms of *gender* ideology.

> Yet another challenge – Francis says – is posed by the various forms of an ideology of gender that "denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time" (*AL* 56).

Undoubtedly, the issue of "*gender* ideology" has become a new pastoral challenge, which is read today as a clear "sign of the times," demanding a multifaceted response from the Church. Pope Francis clearly distinguishes "understanding of human weakness and the complexities of life" from accepting "ideologies that attempt to sunder what are inseparable aspects of reality" (cf. *AL* 56).[14]

Summarizing this part of the analysis, it should be stated that the apostolic exhortations *Familiaris Consortio and Amoris Laetitia* have the character of a pastoral-theological reflection. Therefore, as a starting point, they take the understanding of the anthropological, cultural, social and ecclesial situation in which the salvific mission of the Church is realized. Some elements of this discernment are very similar in both documents. Nevertheless, the almost forty-year time gap between them has caused new challenges to appear, which Francis notes together with the Synod

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14   Cf. Olczyk, "Problematyka *gender*," 131–151.

Fathers and thus broadens and develops the pastoral discernment presented by John Paul II. Thus, there is agreement as to the pastoral method, which takes the discernment of the situation as a starting point, but there are differences with regard to the detailed issues of this discernment and its purpose. As the aim of this discernment, *Familiris consortio* seeks to establish a pastoral orientation "in order that the entire truth and the full dignity of marriage and the family may be preserved and realized" (cf. *FC* 5). On the other hand, *Amoris Laetitia* is more inclined to acknowledge diversity, because "the Synod's reflections show us that there is no stereotype of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems. The situations that concern us are challenges" (*AL* 57).[15]

2. Establishing Pastoral Paradigms

Pastoral activity results from the adopted pastoral-theological concept. Not all active pastors are aware that the initiatives they undertake and the methods and means used result from the adopted principles and specific objectives of pastoral activity. Pastoral documents of the Church are also created on the basis of certain general principles and pastoral concepts. The apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, like many other exhortations resulting from post-conciliar synods, reflected on a certain area of the Church's pastoral activity, namely the pastoral care of families. This resulted from noticing new challenges related to marriage and the family and the crisis of this pastoral care. Pope Francis, having written his exhortation nearly forty years after *Familiaris Consortio*, recognizes that this pastoral crisis does not only concern marriage and family life, but the entire life and mission of the Church in the contemporary world. Therefore, the pastoral-theological principles of his exhortation result more from reflection on pastoral care *in genere*.

Comparing the pastoral-theological concepts of *Familiaris Consortio* and *Amoris Laetitia*, one can formulate a thesis that John Paul II conducts his reflection in the context of the "new evangelization" paradigm, while Francis follows the "pastoral conversion" paradigm. These pastoral paradigms are not contradictory, but contain many common pastoral challenges. It can be said that Francis' postulate of "pastoral conversion" continues and develops the idea of "new evangelization" promoted by John Paul II.

The pastoral paradigm of "new evangelization" under no circumstances means and can mean the proclamation of a "new Gospel" – "new" primarily in the sense of such an interpretation that would soften its radicalism. John Paul II states, "It is,

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15   Cf. Schockenhoff, "Theologischer Paradigmenwechsel," 18.

in fact, to the families of our times that the Church must bring the unchangeable and ever new Gospel of Jesus Christ, just as it is the families involved in the present conditions of the world that are called to accept and to live the plan of God that pertains to them" (*FC* 4). However, the essentially unchanging message of the Gospel enters human history, and thus the spatial and temporal conditions of human existence. The life of individual people who are the addressees of the Gospel runs "here and now" and not "always and everywhere." Such a state of affairs imposes the need for an appropriate adaptation of the evangelizing mission entrusted to the Church, that is what John Paul II called "new evangelization." Without this *novelty*, that is, without taking into account the socio-cultural dynamism of human existence, evangelization would never be complete. In other words, "novelty" belongs to the very essence of evangelization, and thus constitutes its internal and permanent element, which, however, must be revealed and realized in concrete action, as a response to the needs arising from the historical, social and cultural situation. "New evangelization" is therefore nothing else than the verbalized form of God's requirements relating to the necessary historical "rooting" of the Gospel message of salvation, which – although essentially unchanged – is subject to the "law of incarnation": the Word of God, in order to "dwell" among people, must become flesh in every age and place (cf. John 1:14). Hence, the term "new evangelization" – although it has appeared recently – does not characterize only the modern age.[16]

Taking into account the anthropological and cultural challenges, and especially the importance of freedom for modern man, the pastoral paradigm of "new evangelization" includes education towards freedom. Its most basic component is helping to form a properly responsive conscience. "The education of the moral conscience – states John Paul II – which makes every human being capable of judging and of discerning the proper ways to achieve self-realization according to his or her original truth, thus becomes a pressing requirement that cannot be renounced" (*FC* 8).

As a fundamental issue in pastoral work aimed at the formation of conscience, *Familiaris Consortio* accepts the instruction about the moral order of human life and behaviour established by God. This instruction is a special task of the ecclesial hierarchy, which should help "the People of God to gain a correct sense of the faith, to be subsequently applied to practical life." This is done through "fidelity to the Magisterium," which "will also enable priests to make every effort to be united in their judgments, in order to avoid troubling the consciences of the faithful" (cf. *FC* 73). The exhortation, therefore, strongly links the discernment of conscience with the knowledge of the Church's Magisterium and with the need to bring this teaching closer to the faithful in order to properly shape their consciences, because the faithful "do not always remain immune from the obscuring of certain fundamental values, nor

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16   Cf. Polak, *Prezbiterologia pastoralna*, 66–67.

set themselves up as the critical conscience of family culture and as active agents in the building of an authentic family humanism" (cf. *FC* 7).[17]

The teaching of *Familiaris Consortio* about the need for the formation of conscience is also confirmed by *Amoris Laetitia*. Making the right decisions regarding, for example, responsible parenthood requires a formed conscience, and then "their decision will be profoundly free of subjective caprice and accommodation to prevailing social mores" (*AL* 222). Francis, however, sees a certain threat in this context, when the formation becomes a "replacement for consciences." He states: "We also find it hard to make room for the consciences of the faithful, who very often respond as best they can to the Gospel amid their limitations, and are capable of carrying out their own discernment in complex situations. We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them" (*AL* 37).[18] Hence, he postulates a greater incorporation of the decisions of conscience in the Church's practice. He states:

> Recognizing the influence of such concrete factors, we can add that individual conscience needs to be better incorporated into the Church's praxis in certain situations which do not objectively embody our understanding of marriage. Naturally, every effort should be made to encourage the development of an enlightened conscience, formed and guided by the responsible and serious discernment of one's pastor, and to encourage an ever greater trust in God's grace. […] In any event, let us recall that this discernment is dynamic; it must remain ever open to new stages of growth and to new decisions which can enable the ideal to be more fully realized (*AL* 303).[19]

When analyzing the question of understanding conscience and its significance in pastoral care, some theologians perceive a shift in the pastoral paradigm. "It is not difficult to see – states Paweł Bortkiewicz – how clearly the realization of the famous paradigm shift is taking place here – the place of doctrinal principles is taken by the so-called pastoral care embedded in a specific existential situation, marked especially by a multiform postmodern crisis."[20] From the pastoral-theological point of view, *Amoris Laetitia* is therefore not only the heir and continuator of *Familiaris Consortio*, but also introduces a certain new perspective on the pastoral care of the Church, and especially on pastoral paradigms.[21] While *Familiaris Consortio* presents a more normative character of pastoral principles, *Amoris Laetitia* takes as its starting point concrete existential situations.[22] In order to make the Christian mes-

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17   Cf. Pryba, "Naturalne planowanie," 167–168.
18   Cf. Glombik, "Specyficzne aspekty teologii," 15.
19   Cf. Muszala, "Rozeznanie," 233–234.
20   Bortkiewicz, "Kreatywne sumienie," 67.
21   Cf. Gryz, "Prawo stopniowości," 166–167; Glombik, "Adhortacja apostolska," 85–88.
22   Cf. Glombik, "Adhortacja apostolska," 88–96; Schockenhoff, "Theologischer Paradigmenwechsel," 16, 20.

sage on marriage and the family clear in the modern world, it is necessary to "appeal to human experience, since it remains the main way of mediation through which access to the truth of Revelation is possible."[23] Referring to Thomas Aquinas, "Pope Francis makes a far-reaching paradigm shift within the traditional teaching, which can be characterized as a shift in theology from the speculative-deductive method to the inductive approach, which in the case of individual indications referring to the life of the faithful attaches a greater importance to closeness with experience and specific adequacy."[24] *Amoris Laetitia* can therefore only be understood if this shift in the pastoral paradigm is accepted. This change does not reject the teaching existing so far, but places it in a broader context.[25]

Pastoral discernment leads Pope Francis to adopt yet another pastoral paradigm, previously presented in his exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*: "the whole is greater than the part" (cf. *EG* 235). *Amoris Laetitia* highlighted the necessity to address this postulate, showing "as plain as day" the insufficiency of partial solutions. "The whole is greater than the part – Francis teaches – but it is also greater than the sum of its parts. There is no need, then, to be overly obsessed with limited and particular questions. We constantly have to broaden our horizons and see the greater good which will benefit us all" (*EG* 235). Pope Francis therefore addressed the call to conversion to the entire salvific activity of the Church, calling it "pastoral conversion." For purification is a pastoral work. It will not do much to look for short-term recipes to overcome particular phenomena of the contemporary crisis of the Church. It is necessary to deepen reflection on the pastoral vision of the Church's activity *in genere* and to undertake an effort to heal it. When addressing specific issues, Francis perceives them in the context of the entire evangelizing mission of the Church. It is impossible to renew the pastoral care of married couples and families without renewing the integral concept of the Church's pastoral mission in the contemporary world. This results in a search not only for a new shape of its presence in society, but also focusing on its essence, on what constitutes its identity. This applies both to the current church structures, rites and customs, as well as to the content and way of preaching the truths of faith. This whole process is intended to ensure that all the elements of the Church's pastoral care "can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation" (cf. *EG* 27, 41, 43).

Summarizing the issue of pastoral paradigms in the exhortations *Familiaris Consortio* and *Amoris Laetitia*, one should state that in terms of general foundations of pastoral activity, the paradigms of "new evangelization" and "pastoral conversion" are similar to each other "Pastoral conversion" gears the programme of "new

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[23] Cf. Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, 200.
[24] Schockenhoff, "Zerwanie z tradycją," 17.
[25] Cf. Faggioni, "Teologia małżeństwa," 139–140.

evangelization" towards being more missionary.[26] However, regarding more detailed issues in *Amoris Laetitia*, there are many new paradigms that ultimately reveal not only the renewed but also the original pastoral-theological thought of Pope Francis, as Walter Kasper puts it: "*Amoris Laetitia* does not change a single element in the teaching of the Church, yet it changes everything."[27]

3. Pastoral Praxeology of the Exhortation

The third stage of pastoral-theological reflection is the formulation of pastoral-praxeological conclusions. *Familiaris Consortio* devotes the fourth part to this issue. The part is entitled: "Pastoral Care of the Family: Stages, Structures, Agents and Situations." The pastoral-praxeological reflection of the exhortation includes such issues as: preparation for marriage along with the wedding rite, pastoral care of marriages, structure and pastoral care of families and pastoral care in difficult cases (cf. *FC* 65–85). *Amoris Laetitia* also contains pastoral-praxeological parts. Its sixth chapter is entitled: "Some Pastoral Perspectives." It consists of such issues as: proclaiming the Gospel of the family, preparing engaged couples for marriage, accompanying the first years of married life and during crises, after breakdown and divorce and in the event of the spouse's death (cf. *AL* 199–258). The eighth chapter of the exhortation entitled: "Accompanying, Discerning and Integrating Weakness" also has a pastoral-praxeological character. It is devoted to discerning the so-called "irregular" situations and the pastoral attitude of the Church towards them (cf. *AL* 291–253). The analysis of the structure and method of presenting pastoral-praxeological conclusions shows both similarities and differences. In relation to the methodological structure of presenting the conclusions, *Familiaris Consortio* is very well-ordered. After the cairological and criteriological reflection, the praxeological stage follows. On the other hand, in *Amoris Laetitia*, pastoral-praxeological conclusions, apart from the chapters indicated above, can also be found in other places.

The pastoral idea linking the two exhortations is the indication of the priority character of the pastoral care of families. We read in *Familiaris Consortio*, "Every effort should be made to strengthen and develop pastoral care for the family, which should be treated as a real matter of priority, in the certainty that future evangelization depends largely on the domestic Church" (*FC* 65). A similar understanding of the character of the pastoral care of families is shown by *Amoris Laetitia* (cf. *AL* 200–202). It is not only a part of ecclesial activity, but is inscribed in its ordinary pastoral care. Therefore, "The main contribution to the pastoral care of families

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26   Cf. Polak, "Misyjny dynamizm," 177.
27   Kasper, "Amoris Laetitia," 725–726.

is offered by the parish, which is the family of families, where small communities, ecclesial movements and associations live in harmony" (*AL* 202). Thus, each parish should become aware of "the grace and responsibility that it receives from the Lord in order that it may promote the pastoral care of the family" (cf. *FC* 70).

Compared to *Familiaris Consortio*, which afforded an evangelizing character to the pastoral care of families, Pope Francis' document made it more missionary in nature. The consequence of this approach are practical guidelines, as can be seen in *Amoris Laetitia*, "Given the pace of life today, most couples cannot attend frequent meetings; still, we cannot restrict our pastoral outreach to small and select groups. Nowadays, pastoral care for families has to be fundamentally missionary, going out to where people are. We can no longer be like a factory, churning out courses that for the most part are poorly attended" (*AL* 230).[28] The fruit of the missionary pastoral care of families is also a departure from purely theoretical preaching which is isolated from the real problems of married couples and families. In this context, *Amoris Laetitia* points to the pastoral empowerment of families. It affirms that "Christian families are the principal agents of the family apostolate, above all through «their joy-filled witness as domestic churches»" (*AL* 200). This witness is necessary, inter alia, in order to move away from merely presenting "some norms" in the pastoral care of families and turning to "proposing values" (cf. *AL* 201).

Another new pastoral-praxeological postulate, formulated by Francis, is to emphasize the importance of "inclusive pastoral work" resulting from the adoption of the "logic of integration." He puts it this way: "It is a matter of reaching out to everyone, of needing to help each person find his or her proper way of participating in the ecclesial community and thus to experience being touched by an «unmerited, unconditional and gratuitous» mercy. No one can be condemned for ever, because that is not the logic of the Gospel! Here I am not speaking only of the divorced and remarried, but of everyone, in whatever situation they find themselves" (*AL* 297).[29]

Amoris Laetitia also developed the perception of the pastoral care of families in the context of the "pastoral care of mercy."[30] A quantitative analysis of papal documents shows that John Paul II uses the term "mercy" only three times, while Francis uses the term forty-four times. *Familiaris Consortio* indicates mercy with regard to the sacrament of penance twice (cf. *FC* 58) and once in relation to the attitude of the Church towards divorced persons who have remarried. Here it postulates that the Church should be a "merciful mother" for them (cf. *FC* 84). Pope Francis, in turn, perceives the activity of the Church in the context of mercy and he also uses this pastoral principle in relation to the vision of pastoral care for families contained in

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[28]   Polak, "Misyjny dynamizm," 177.
[29]   Cf. Slatinek, "Pastoralni izzivi," 141–142; Goleń, "Towarzyszenie," 118–120.
[30]   Cf. Przygoda, "Dowartościowanie miłości," 159–161.

Amoris Laetitia.[31] He states in the introduction to the document that it "is especially timely in this Jubilee Year of Mercy" (cf. *AL* 5). Then he refers to the "logic of pastoral mercy" which must penetrate the entire pastoral care of families (cf. *AL* 307–312).[32] The rejection of the logic of mercy in the pastoral care of families will "«indoctrinate» the Gospel message, turning it into «dead stones to be hurled at others»" (cf. *AL* 49). Francis says, "At times we find it hard to make room for God's unconditional love in our pastoral activity. We put so many conditions on mercy that we empty it of its concrete meaning and real significance. That is the worst way of watering down the Gospel. […] For this reason, we should always consider «inadequate any theological conception which in the end puts in doubt the omnipotence of God and, especially, his mercy»" (*AL* 311). According to Wiesław Przygoda, "the novelty of *Amoris Laetitia* lies in the fact that Pope Francis, instead of rigorous pastoral care, proposes pastoral care permeated with mercy – instead of cold objectivity, he proposes insightful, patient and long-term discernment of the situation."[33]

In comparison with *Familiaris Consortio*, Pope Francis' document also gives a more marked mystagogical dimension to the pastoral care of marriages and families.[34] A brief description of the understanding of mystagogic initiation was presented by Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, where we read that mystagogic initiation "basically has to do with two things: a progressive experience of formation involving the entire community and a renewed appreciation of the liturgical signs of Christian initiation" (cf. *EG* 166). At the same time, he points to the need to strengthen the mystagogical dimension of pastoral care, since "many manuals and programmes have not yet taken sufficiently into account the need for a mystagogical renewal, one which would assume very different forms based on each educational community's discernment" (cf. *EG* 166).

Mystagogical renewal concerns the entire pastoral care of families. But it is preparation for marriage that requires it most. John Paul II described preparation for marriage as "in a catechumenal process" or as "a journey of faith, which is similar to the catechumenate" (cf. *FC* 66). This idea was taken up and developed by Pope Francis, who stated that preparation for marriage is a kind of "initiation" to the sacrament of marriage, which provides engaged couples "with the help they need to receive the sacrament worthily and to make a solid beginning of life as a family" (*AL* 207). The mystagogic pastoral care of families will take into account both liturgical and catechetical mystagogy (*AL* 213–216) and a "new mystagogy" referring to the experience and "mysticism of everyday life" (cf. *AL* 225–226).[35] This dimension of mystagogy is much less emphasized in the teaching of *Familiaris Consortio*.

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31   Cf. Hajduk, "Miłosierdzie duszpasterskie," 187–190.
32   Cf. Petrà, "From Familiaris consortio," 212.
33   Przygoda, "Dowartościowanie miłości," 160.
34   Cf. Polak, "Mystagogical Preparation," 242–250; Kobak, "Ujęcie duchowości," 155.
35   Cf. Polak, "Zarys koncepcji," 217–242.

Summarizing this stage of the analysis, one should state that the pastoral praxeology of pastoral care of families presented in the exhortations results from the previously described analysis of the cultural and social situation and from the adopted pastoral paradigms. Hence, at this point, both the continuation of pastoral thought and its fundamental renewal were revealed. Its main postulates are missionary orientation of the pastoral care of families, perceiving it in the perspective of "inclusive pastoral work" and "logic of integration" and pointing to the significance of "pastoral mercy" and mystagogical renewal. This confirms the thesis that Pope Francis gave a new shape to the concept of pastoral care of families.

Conclusions

In numerous theological publications on Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, two ways of approaching the content of this document can be observed.[36] The first one indicates that Pope Francis did not intend to introduce changes in the teaching of the Church and therefore refers to the statements of his predecessors, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. He only uses a different language to express what had been known in a new way.[37] The second one emphasizes the significant changes introduced to the teaching of the Church by *Amoris Laetitia*. It is primarily about changing the pastoral paradigm, that is also the pastoral-theological paradigm. Eberhard Schockenhoff states:

> When reading *Amoris Laetitia* in direct comparison with the earlier statements of the Magisterium, including John Paul II's exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, or with the statements of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on love, marriage and family, significant differences emerge. The Pope is concerned with nothing else, but a replacement of an objectivist moral science based on static, essential metaphysics with the one corresponding to the Gospel and pragmatic theology which is characterized by greater relevance in life.[38]

The pastoral theological analysis of *Familiaris Consortio* and *Amoris Laetitia* presented here indicates that the thesis that the document of Pope Francis breaks with the current teaching and practice of the Church regarding the pastoral care of families cannot be confirmed. It confirms the thesis about the continuation and also about development of this teaching. It results both from the cairological premise (evangelical discernment of the anthropological and cultural situation) and from

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36   Cf. Kasper, "Amoris Laetitia," 723–724.
37   Cf. Dyduch, "Adhortacja," 44.
38   Schockenhoff, "Zerwanie z tradycją," 12–13.

the criteriological premise (adoption of certain paradigms of the pastoral mission of the Church). Hence, the comparison of *Familiaris Consortio* and *Amoris Laetitia* in a pastoral-theological perspective indicates the continuation of the teaching of the Church, but also the formulation of his own pastoral paradigms by Pope Francis, which gives his teaching an original character and renews the current concept of pastoral care for families.

Translated by Karol Matysiak

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*Verbum
Vitae*

Nada vs *sunyata*. The Notion of Emptiness in John of the Cross and in Zen Buddhism

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Abstract: It is not seldom that some authors try to compare the doctrine of Zen Buddhism with the doctrine of Saint John of the Cross with the intention of finding some parallels. The most striking similarity seems to be the term "emptiness" (*nada* – John of the Cross and *sunyata* – Zen Buddhism). The difficulty of the comparison stems from the fact that in both cases this term has an experiential meaning, i.e. it describes subjective feelings one has while following the spiritual path. Therefore, the intent of the paper is to capture the metaphysical and epistemological meaning of this term in order to facilitate the comparison. This effort has led to the conclusion that in both doctrines the essentially different meaning of emptiness reflects their different understanding of the ultimate reality. Consequently, meditational techniques which both forms of spirituality adopted to achieve the ultimate reality exclude each other, and the semantic proximity of Zen Buddhism and John of the Cross is misleading.

Keywords: God, ultimate reality, contemplation, nothingness, mystical experience, Zen Buddhism, John of the Cross

It seems that in the recent decades finding parallels between the spiritual doctrine of Saint John of the Cross and Zen Buddhism[1] has been in vogue. In fact, there are some more or less similarly close-fitting expressions or parallel topics in both spiritual ways. There are even Christian communities which try to combine both paths, stressing the parallelism of their doctrines.[2]

Looking at the spectrum of the attitudes taken by various authors in this interreligious dialog, we can notice they are fairly different. Some center on the notion of nothingness – *nada* in John of the Cross and *sunyata* in Zen. According to some authors, these concepts are not antagonistic, even though they represent different metaphysical and spiritual perspectives.[3] Some like to emphasize the usage of similar words, like the inner light or the hidden internal person's treasure.[4] Others focus on the uniqueness of the ultimate reality or love,[5] and still others are convinced that both forms of spirituality refer to the same "deep reality."[6] In turn, some authors seem to

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1   Zen Buddhism is a form of Mahayana Buddhism.
2   Puglisi – Carini, "Monjas y sacerdotes."
3   Guerra, "Zen y Juan de la Cruz," 1562. Cf. Merton, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*, 76–77.
4   Schlüter Rodés, "La Experiencia"; Schlüter Rodés, "Las religiones," 245.
5   Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 176–177; Guerra, "Zen y Juan de la Cruz," 1561.
6   Puglisi, "El encuentro del catolicismo," 60.

want to find some similarities at all costs.[7] And finally, there are those who come to the conclusion that both doctrines are at variance because they believe in quite different ultimate realities.[8]

In my view, this diversity of opinions stems from the conceptual difficulty to understand the crucial term – emptiness (*nada*, *sunyata*). Therefore, my aim is to establish its precise meaning, without which we cannot proceed in the interpretation without falling into the trap of false parallelism. The conclusion, to which I will come, is that both traditions are essentially different and only superficially similar because they understand this term otherwise.

One of the difficulties we have to face when analyzing both ways is the experiential language adopted by Zen-Buddhist masters and John of the Cross. Therefore, I have to go beyond the linguistic expressions in order to find their metaphysical meanings.

1. Emptiness in Zen Buddhism

1.1. The Ultimate Reality in Zen Buddhism

I think that to the Westerners the notion of the Absolute (Buddha-nature) or *sunyata* can be somehow accessible through the notion of *apeiron,* introduced to the western philosophy by Anaximander. We may draw an analogy between *apeiron* and *sunyata*. Giovanni Reale describes it as something that is infinite, unlimited and indefinite.[9] In this description of *apeiron* the key word for us is its indefiniteness. Ultimate reality in Zen – *sunyata*, is indefinite. "There is no Buddhist Absolute in the sense of a metaphysical entity or immutable essence."[10] Consequently, the Absolute is indefinite.

There are epistemological consequences of the indefiniteness of the Absolute. The human mind, which operates using notions, has no access to it. Another consequence is that there is no word that expresses *sunyata*. Therefore, in Zen *sunyata* is also rendered by word "voidness" or "emptiness." This can be misleading for the Westerners, because it forces us to think that *sunyata* is absolute nothingness or non-being. On the contrary, for Zen masters, *sunyata* is the fullness of reality, also called Buddha-nature. This reality is without essence.[11] Consequently, when mov-

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7   Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 176–177.
8   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, iii; 209; 350,
9   Reale, *Historia filozofii*, I, 82.
10   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 139.
11   As Jakov Mamić (*San Giovanni della Croce*, 136) argued: "*Sunya* non è la negazione dell'essere ontologico, ma concettuale; esso (*sunya*) è «perfetta pienezza.» […] La natura de questo essere «unificato» non conosce né limiti, né determinazioni, né negazioni, né affermazioni, né pensieri, né pienezza, né vuoto."

ing on the metaphysical ground we should say that *sunyata* is the fullness of reality (Buddha-nature). On the epistemological level, the set of notions, which corresponds to *sunyata*, is empty – void.[12] The western distinction between the epistemological and metaphysical realm is sometimes neglected in the expressions used by Zen masters, who say that *sunyata* is emptiness without adding that it is also the fullness of reality, because they use an experiential language.[13] It means that they express the state of mind of a Zen practitioner, who experienced the ultimate reality realizing that its nature is indeterminate. Consequently, we can experience *sunyata* but are unable to talk about it.[14]

When Buddhists say that *sunyata* is void, they also stress that it is beyond the realm of logic. According to the rules of logic, the notion of cat can be contradicted by the notion of non-cat. Thus, under the standards of logic we could say that the universe consists of cat and non-cat. *Sunyata*, however, is beyond affirmation and negation: being and non-being, existence and non-existence. Consequently, the mind and its logical approach are inadequate means to approach the Absolute. The Western "nothingness" or "non-existence" does not correspond to the Zen emptiness.[15] Therefore, Buddhists consider their doctrine about the Absolute to be the Middle Path.[16] And again: we are unable to think about the Absolute, i.e. reasoning does not help to achieve it, because we can only experience it.[17]

We can draw another analogy between Anaximander's *apeiron* and *sunyata*. If *apeiron* is infinite, unlimited and indefinite, it means that it is not anything solid, which in turn means we ought to understand it as unsubstantial. The same we can say about *sunyata*: it is not a metaphysical entity or being. A Chinese Buddhist scholar illustrates the most important characteristics of s*unyata*:

> 1. Emptiness implies non-obstruction. . . like space or the void, it exists within many things but never hinders or obstructs anything. 2. Emptiness implies omnipresence. […]. 3. Emptiness implies sameness... […]. 4. There is no limitation. […]. 5. It has no appearance. […]. 6. It has no defilement. […]. 7. It is unmoved and permanent. […]. 8. It is empty of being.

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[12]   If we describe the Absolute, we negate it somehow and therefore, our language about it is only relative (Cf. Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 171).

[13]   Cf. Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 123.

[14]   In Zen, any language about the ultimate reality has relative value because it corresponds to the realm of world that we see but cannot apply to the ultimate reality (cf. Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 171–172).

[15]   Cf. Suzuki, *Essays* [1958], 23.

[16]   Chong Hun Choi (*A Comparative Study*, 146) noted: "From this 'Middle Way' perspective, self is simultaneously both self and not-self. Both being and not-being are affirmed as they belong together. Thus the Middle is neither mere nothing nor nothing negative. In this sense, it does not exist, yet nor does non-emptiness exist."

[17]   Cf. Suzuki, *Essays* [1961], 23–24.

It means that it is impossible to measure. 9. It is empty without emptiness. This means that it does not attach to itself. 10. It has nothing.[18]

1.2. True Nature of Things

Let us use another word that Anaximander introduced to the Western philosophy – *arche*. For the pre-Socratic philosophers, *arche* is the first metaphysical principle, primordial and ultimate reality. All things have their origin in it and eventually turn into it.[19] It also accounts for all the phenomena that we recognize as things and people.[20] In other words, *arche* is the true "stuff" of all that exists. *Sunyata* is something similar to *arche* meant as the unsubstantial, boundless and indefinite principle of everything.

At this level, the analogy we intended to draw should stop because it is here where we meet the first difference between Anaximander's cosmogony and Zen. *Sunyata* is not the cause of things and phenomena. For Anaximander, the things and phenomena we perceive are real. For Zen masters, they are just illusions because there is only *sunyata* – the only and ultimate reality. If by form we understand a being, a Zen master can say: "Form is not different from emptiness; emptiness is not different from form."[21] In this way *sunyata* cannot be the cause of things. The world we know, the things we know and the individual self are empty, i.e. they lack substantiality and individual essence. "*Sunyata* suggests therefore that although things in the phenomenal world appear to be real and substantial outside, they are actually tenuous and empty within. They are not real but only appear to be real […] all things are empty in that they lack a subsisting entity or self-being."[22] Thus, in the visible things there is invisible ultimate reality – *sunyata*.[23]

The illusory reality of the beings and of the self consists in the false sense of duality we live in, or better said, we are responsible for. Commonly, we experience the division of the reality into subject-object duality, which is false and is a sign of ignorance.

> For Dogen, however, ignorance does not mean simply "not knowing." It is not merely an intellectual lack of knowledge. Instead, ignorance pertains to our fundamental attitude toward life or experience of life. In this regard, ignorance involves duality. The basic duality is that of the ego and that which the ego conceives of as totally other than itself. The ego, however, not only conceives of itself as separate but also as final, as ultimately responsible for all deeds, thoughts, and speech. The ego takes itself to be an absolutely independent

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18   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 150.
19   Reale, *Historia filozofii*, V, 31.
20   Reale, *Historia filozofii*, I, 76–77.
21   *Heart Sutra*: Liang-Chieh, *The Record of Tung-shan*, 9.
22   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 152.
23   Suzuki, *Essays* [1961], 25–26.

entity. This is the fundamental problem of human existence: duality. Everything is seen to be in opposition to something else. In this respect, ignorance is as Suzuki defines "another name for logical dualism."[24]

The world and its beings lack any substantiality, they are emptiness – *sunyata*. "In other words, to say that everything is devoid of selfhood is to indicate that it has no definitive nature, or determinateness. Nothing, then, can be truly existent if it is indeterminate or indefinite."[25] The beings in their visible and individual aspect have status of something transient or of an event. "All things flow and nothing is permanent. […] The self is no less impermanent or transient than the world. […] «When the transient nature of the world is recognized, the ordinary selfish mind does not arise.» Thus, one is nothing other than one's change; to exist as anything is impermanence. There are no basic, enduring facts of existence."[26]

1.3. Suffering and the Way Out – *satori*

In other words, we can say that the individual things and the ideas that we have correspond to the human mental activity and ego-centeredness, and thus the individual self is responsible for their "existence."[27] Also, this existence is the realm of human language. The individual self attaches itself to the concepts and so, it lives in illusion, which causes suffering and reincarnation – which is the essential credence of Buddhism.[28]

An adept of Zen is the one who wants to discover his or her true self and break the circle of suffering.[29] The way of getting out of this is stopping the conceptualization.[30] There is a meditational technique (*zazen*),[31] which helps extinguish mental activity in order to make possible the "achieving" of the Buddha-nature (emptiness-*sunyata*), which is attaining awakening or enlightenment (*satori*), giving a new insight into reality.[32] Apart from *zazen* the practitioner has to exercise a set of virtues and feel compassion towards all the sentient forms he knows, which forces him to

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[24]   Dogen: founder of Soto school of Zen; one of Zen masters who transmitted Chinese tradition to Japan. In many aspects, his doctrine is an example of the Zen doctrine as such. Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 114; 215–216.

[25]   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 144–145.

[26]   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 139.

[27]   Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 133; Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 225.

[28]   Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism*, 52–53; Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism*, 117–118.

[29]   Cf. Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path*, chapter I; *Sutta: Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion*.

[30]   Williams – Tribe, *Buddhist Thought*, 136–137.

[31]   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 195. Chong Hun Choi (*ibidem*, 192–197) also noted: "[Zazen] It is beyond both thinking and not thinking. […] It is at least mind-filled-with-nothingness." "From without-thinking/enlightenment, therefore, we see things as they really are" (*ibidem*, 201–202).

[32]   Suzuki, *Essays* [1958], 261.

delay the final liberation from mortality after having reached *satori* in order to help all other sentient beings to overcome the illusion (*boddhisattva*).[33]

We might be tempted to say that the person who stopped the conceptual activity of mind reaches the true insight (awakening) in the ultimate reality. This cannot be true because the existence of the individual person (self) is a part of the illusion. Therefore, there is neither a union of the individual self with the ultimate reality, nor does the self reach the truth. The self as a subject has to drop off because its "existence" belongs to the realm of duality, which is false.[34] "The self-awareness that emptiness is self, is for Dogen's Zen Buddhism the most fundamental or original meaning of man's existence."[35] Zen masters say "I am Buddha-nature,"[36] which means "I am the ultimate reality." This creates quite a new insight into the entire reality perceived as a set of individuals until now. The truth has been achieved. Therefore, it is called awakening.[37]

That is why it is impossible, according to Zen, to contemplate the Absolute, because contemplation requires the subject-object duality.[38] Consequently, in *satori* there is just gazing without the subject-object duality, without space-temporal distinctions. "This non-thinking experience shows a moment of experience as a unitary experience which has neither internal differentiation nor external boundary."[39]

The people who reached *satori* testify that they experienced that everything has the same nature and that everything is in unity.

> One day I wiped out all notions from my mind. I gave up all desire. I discarded all the worlds with which I thought and stayed in quietude. I felt a little queer – as if I were being carried into something, or as if I were touching some power unknown to me. […] I entered. I lost the boundary of my physical body. I had my skin, of course, but I felt I was standing in the center of the cosmos. I spoke, by my words had lost their meaning. I saw people coming towards me, but all were the same man. All were myself! I had never known this world. I had believed that I was created, but now I must change my opinion: I was never created; I was the cosmos; no individual Mr. Sasaki existed.[40]

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33   Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 118.
34   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 160; Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 136, n. 62; 176.
35   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 154.
36   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 260.
37   Suzuki, *Essays* [1958], 261–263. As Chong Hun Choi (*A Comparative Study*, 184) noted: "Enlightenment is generally defined as incommensurable with psychological activities. Traditionally enlightenment is generally viewed as realization of a universal truth that necessarily transcends psychological activities. The Chinese word Wu means «to awaken to the fact,» or, loosely, «to understand»."
38   Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 127, 162.
39   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 197.
40   Sokei-an, "Sokei-an Says."

This witness does not describe Buddha-nature but only the fact that all phenomena are one.[41] After having reached *satori*, the mental activity returns, and the sense of individuality and substantiality reappears, but now the person knows that all this is illusion.[42]

Let us consider *sunyata* as *mind*.[43] The self in *satori* does not dissolve entirely but it gains a new perspective. The individual mind becomes transcendental, which means it realizes its true nature.

> In fact, Dogen has classified three different kinds of mind: conscious mind, cosmic mind, and transcendental mind. The conscious mind is generally said to be the *citta*, as mentioned above, which refers to discriminating mind (as normal consciousness). The cosmic mind is said to be "unconsciousness." And the transcendental mind is said to be the Bodhi-mind or enlightened mind.[44] Thus, for Dogen the entire universe of the external world is mind. He equalizes mind with mountains, rivers, the sun, the moon, and the stars. Yet it is not just coextensive with them nor in proportion to them, but transcends the sum total of them.[45]

As follows from the aforementioned context, we may say that the Absolute is the all-aware, unreflective mind without any thoughts.[46] "The essence of Mind is free from thoughts."[47] We should remember that this quotation has an experiential and not speculative character, which means that this mind is not to be understood as a concept within a conceptual system, but as what is experienced by a practitioner of Zen.

Buddhists reject the notion of the Christian God because it delimits the Absolute.[48] The Christian God is considered a remarkable obstacle in the liberation of the mind. *Sunyata* transcends all the categories, and therefore, it is neither a supreme being, nor a person who acts, creates and performs other activities.[49]

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[41]   Cf. Suzuki, *Essays* [1958], 263.
[42]   Cf. Suzuki, *Essays* [1958], 264.
[43]   Cf. Suzuki, *The Zen Doctrine*, 23.
[44]   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 129
[45]   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 132; 134; Cf. Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 157.
[46]   As Jakov Mamić (*San Giovanni della Croce*, 136) noted: "Uno si trova in un atteggiamento de guardare, di essere uno con l'essere totale."
[47]   Asvaghosha, *The Awakening of Faith*, 5.
[48]   Cf. Suzuki, *Essays* [1958], 263.
[49]   Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 176.

2. The Context of Emptiness in Saint John of the Cross

2.1. The Ultimate Reality

For John of the Cross, the universe consists of God, the supreme being, and beings created by him out of nothing. If we describe Zen as monistic, then the system of John of the Cross is dualistic (spirit–matter) and theistic (God–creatures). The God of John of the Cross is personal, i.e. knowing and willing. He is absolute, which means he is perfect ontologically, morally and personally. He is a community of three divine persons. His essence John could define as personal love, which wants to share itself with people in order to make them eternally happy as the participants of this love. "In the first place it should be known that if anyone is seeking God, the Beloved is seeking that person much more."[50]

2.2. The Beings and Human Person – Self

All creatures, including people, are beings partially ontologically separated from God. It means that they are neither God nor his emanation, because there is not any ontological continuity between God and them. They are independent beings, which means that their and God's existence are different, but God is within them sustaining their existence. All that the beings are is given to them by God, i.e. they participate in the divine perfection. Beings have some real, yet non-essential similarity to God. The perfection of God surpasses the human capability of knowing. There is no notion by which the divine essence could be known and expressed.[51] On the other hand, God reveals something about himself using human language. In this revelation, he uses examples and images from the world in order to make himself understandable for humans who he is. This means that he translates into human language the ineffable mystery of his being, i.e. he says something about himself in human language. Accordingly, we know with certainty who he is but how it realizes in the divine essence remains an inaccessible (inconceivable) mystery for us.

According to John, a human person as the ontological unity of a soul and a body is a relational being. It means that by nature a person is called to be in an amorous relationship with God but it is possible only by the aid of the divine grace. The destiny of human life is to be in communion with God, where God is the only object of human love and knowledge[52] and other creatures are known and loved through the participation in the divine knowledge and love. It is possible to achieve the fullness

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50   John of the Cross, "The Living Flame of Love" 3,28.
51   John of the Cross, "*The Ascent of Mount Carmel*" II,8,3. Cf. García, "Teología mística," 1380; García, "Creación," 344–347.
52   John of the Cross, "The Living Flame of Love" 3,18.

of this kind of relationship with God after death. It is also possible in this life after having undergone purification and illumination. Saint John of the Cross calls this intimate closeness of relationship with God in this life the mystical union. The union is the peak of the spiritual life. On the other hand, it is an anticipation of the vision of God after death but in a different state because of the corporal dimension of the human person in this life. John, in accordance with the Catholic vision of man, regards human body as good, and therefore the nature of the body has to be taken into consideration as the participant of the mystical union. In the state of union, all human spiritual faculties (by which the soul acts) are centered on God only, and the purified human body in its activity depends only on the soul influenced entirely by God.[53] In this union, God and the human person are separate beings but united through the divine love, which is one in God and in the human person who accepts this love as his or her own.[54] We could say that the two wills want the same and act as one will. As said by John of the Cross, this is "the union and transformation of love," where the person becomes divinized in his or her acts, but their human essence remains always unchanged.

2.3. The Real State of the Human Person

Although the union with God is the goal of spiritual life, the real state of humans prompts us to something quite opposite. There are two factors which inhibit the process of the mystical union. The first is the body, which – with its sensual activity – hinders the soul from turning entirely towards God. In its acts of knowledge and love, the soul depends on the body, i.e. senses and their impressions.[55] The mind operates only on the stuff provided by the senses. Therefore, the mind can move only in the realm of the material world and of the notions that derive from it. Thus, all the notions of God that can be created by the mind are somehow creature-like. We should remember that for John the mind plays the leading role in spiritual activity because the will – the second spiritual faculty – can only love what is known by the mind. The third spiritual faculty, which is the memory, stores only this, which was formerly in the body, in the mind or in the will. As John suggests, these three spiritual faculties in the spiritual union ought to unite with God alone, but on the natural level of their activity it is impossible.

The second factor, which hinders the process of union with God, is the original sin, which causes some kind of disorder in people. We might say that senses are inclined towards some goods in an instinctive way, which, if not regulated by the mind and the will, becomes disordered. Disordered in this case means that the goods are

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53   John of the Cross, "The Spiritual Canticle" 40,1.
54   John of the Cross, "The Spiritual Canticle" 12,7.
55   John of the Cross, "The Ascent of Mount Carmel" I,3,3.

not always in accordance with people's nature, making them deviate from the final destination, which is God. The result of the disordered attachments is a waste of energy squandered in an unproportioned way on the goods that are not God. In this case, the sensual life is centered on the finite goods, and the spirit is paralyzed in the things concerning God.[56]

2.4. Purification – the Active Part

In order to make God the only object of human acting, Saint John of the Cross teaches how the senses should be freed from disordered attachments.[57] In his asceticism, he does not advise putting the sensuality in the state of complete vacuum but shows how to reeducate the sensual sphere in order to curb all that is disordered.[58] In this context, he uses the Spanish word *nada*. The word *nada* – nothingness – has an experiential meaning: it describes the way one feels and not what objectively is going on in the senses (and spiritual faculties). In this case, since the senses have to reject all the disordered attachments and use only these sensual goods which allow one to pursue God, there is the subjective feeling of emptiness in them. Objectively, there is something in them but because of the goods the senses got used to, they feel empty and thirsty, as John states.

As a tool of elevating the mind to God, at the beginning of the spiritual journey John allows one to use the creation as a kind of image, in which there are traces of God.[59] Yet, as the world has only an inessential similarity to God, and the soul longs for a direct union with him, these traces do not suffice to fulfill the soul's desire to unite with God.

In order to achieve this goal, John advises undertaking efforts to center the three spiritual faculties on God. The mind, which leads the two other faculties, focuses on God if it accepts the truths revealed by God. Faith as a means is a true, certain (infallible) but dark way to him.[60] Because faith is formulated in notions and images, its content has a mentally accessible dimension, which leads the mind to the reality of inconceivable God. The words which we understand and the situations that we can imagine – like God acting as a good father – say something true about the divine perfection, which transcends our comprehension. Therefore, accepting the revealed

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56   John of the Cross, "The Ascent of Mount Carmel" I,15,1; III,16,6.
57   Jakov Mamić (*San Giovanni della Croce*, 105) noted: "il vero problema sono le affezioni disordinate di queste forze appetitive."
58   John of the Cross, "Letter 13: To a discalced Carmelite friar, Segovia, April 14, 1589"; de Haro Iglesias, "Virtud/es," 1533–1534.
59   John of the Cross, "The Spiritual Canticle" 6,1.
60   John of the Cross ("The Ascent of Mount Carmel" II,6,2) noted: "faith is the substance of things to be hoped for and that these things are not manifest to the intellect, even though its consent to them is firm and certain. […] For though faith brings certitude to the intellect, it does not produce clarity, but only darkness."

truths about God, we have some notions and images in the mind, but they are just sings of something mysterious, which transcends our cognitive abilities. Living in faith helps us abandon our human way of thinking about God and opens us up to the mystery, which is God. John states it firmly and clearly that in order to unite the mind with God we must always, i.e. at every level of our spiritual development, have the attitude of faith.

> For the likeness between faith and God is so close that no other difference exists than that between believing in God and seeing him. Just as God is infinite, faith proposes him to us as infinite. […] And just as God is darkness to our intellect, so faith dazzles and blinds us. Only by means of faith, in divine light exceeding all understanding, does God manifest himself to the soul.[61]

He uses the word *nada* (*tiniebla-oscuridad*, *Dios escondido*) – nothingness – also to describe the feelings one has when living in faith. And here too, the word "nothingness" has only the experiential meaning because in such circumstances the person abandons the purely human way of conceiving God for the sake of the truths revealed, of which it cannot have a clear and distinct idea. Objectively, the mind is always filled with something: first – its own ideas, embracing faith – the notions provided by the revelation and the reality they relate to – namely God. On the other hand, the amorous relationship with Christ (God-man – the essence of the Christian faith) is a privileged means to live in faith and eventually to unite with God.[62]

The other two faculties must exercise respectively similar supernatural acts in order to center on God, who is known through the mediation of faith. The memory in its acts of hope should possess God only and through the acts of love, the will ought to put all its joy solely in God, too. Again, also in this case we cannot talk about the objective nothingness dwelling in these two faculties because nothingness or emptiness is but the impression one has after having left things, which are not God. Objectively, in these faculties there is God transmitted to them in faith.

2.5.   Purification – the Passive Part

Because of the two aforementioned impediments (the dependence of the spirit on the senses and the effects of the original sin causing sensual and moral disorder), it is impossible for humans to reach the mystical union with God with natural resources. It is impossible, even practicing severe renouncement, to extirpate the disordered desires dwelling almost naturally in the human sensual sphere, which dominates the spiritual faculties of the soul. Also, living in faith does not sufficiently cleanse

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61   John of the Cross, "The Ascent of Mount Carmel" II,9,1.
62   Cf. John of the Cross, "The Ascent of Mount Carmel" II,22,3.

our mind from the anthropomorphic understanding of God. Therefore, God himself comes with his help. When God notices the readiness of the person to deepen his or her purification towards the union with him, the process of the passive purification done by God begins.[63]

A steady condition that one has to cultivate is the attitude of faith, as John stresses. It is so because faith not only teaches about God but also gives him: "God is the substance and concept of faith."[64] It means that the person who lives in faith opens up to the real presence of God. This is an indispensable condition which must be fulfilled in order to be purified by God and be united with him.

With passive purification, contemplation begins. "For contemplation is nothing else than a secret and peaceful and loving inflow of God."[65] Contemplation is a real expression of the fact that God is love sharing himself to other rational beings. John ascribes two symbols to contemplation: light and fire. Contemplation as light illuminates the mind in order to concentrate it solely on God, and fire symbolizes love, which inflames the will. In the state of the vision of God "face to face" (only possible after death), God is the only object for these who participate in the contemplation. However, the situation is different in this life. There are at the same time things and God in those, who are following the spiritual path. In such a case, the divine presence, i.e. the contemplation, removes all that is not God from the senses and faculties of the soul, causing feelings of pain, darkness, emptiness and dryness respectively to the faculty. It is so because, as John says: "two contraries [God and creatures] cannot coexist in one subject."[66]

Summing up, the same contemplation plays different roles at different stages of people's lives. It inflames with sweet flavor and illuminates with clear light in heaven. For these who step on the path towards the mystical union with God in this life, contemplation firstly purifies, removing everything which is not God-centered from the senses and faculties. Secondly, it illuminates the mind with light and inflames the will with love. This secret inflow of God in the person initially causes darkness in the mind, because we are not used to God's direct presence and we do not recognize him as such. The more intense his presence is, the deeper darkness/emptiness one suffers. When one gets used to it, one begins to notice the new presence of God, but this time it is subtle and general.[67] Something similar happens to the will.

> This flame [of contemplation] of itself is extremely loving, and the will of itself is excessively dry and hard. When the flame tenderly and lovingly assails the will, hardness is felt beside the tenderness, and dryness beside the love. The will does not feel the love and

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63   John of the Cross, "The Dark Night" I,1,1.
64   John of the Cross, "The Spiritual Canticle" 1,10.
65   John of the Cross, "The Dark Night" I,10,6.
66   John of the Cross, "The Dark Night" II,9,2.
67   John of the Cross, "The Dark Night" I,9,4.

tenderness of the flame since, because of its contrary hardness and dryness, it is unprepared for this until the love and tenderness of God expel the dryness and hardness and reign within it. […] It feels this until the flame, penetrating within it, enlarges, widens, and makes it capable of receiving the flame itself.[68]

2.6. The State of the Mystical Union with God

In the mystical union with God, the person reaches the state of total God-centeredness, which equals complete purification of the person, who is now totally passive. Now the same contemplation illuminates the mind giving some knowledge of God. This knowledge is still dimmed, because it is impossible to see God in this life. Firstly, the person has some very imperfect understanding of God. Mostly it is an anthropomorphic way of conceiving. For the life of faith, the point of reference is the Christian revelation. It provides certain (infallible), general, dark and mediated knowledge of God. With contemplation, God himself begins to fill the mind with his direct presence, which gradually purifies the mind from all false understanding of God, cleansing the person's faith. The peak of the knowledge of God in this life, according to John, are very rare visions, which are never clear and precise but give some understanding of the divine attributes.[69] Thus, the knowledge of God undergoes a process in which the human understanding of God falls apart, causing the sensation of darkness and emptiness in the mind. When the process of purification is finished, the darkness softens and the mind receives some light, but now not in a notion-like form, because the direct presence of God in the mind is above any notion. Only seeing God in heaven, "face to face," will provide the clear and detailed vision of God.[70]

The central role in the passive period of purification and afterwards in the mystical union with God plays love. "For it is only love that unites and joins the soul to God."[71] If we may say that the essence of God is love, the person who opens up to this love becomes in this aspect similar to God and becomes God-like. It is love and not knowledge that gives the mystical experience of God, because it makes the person God-like and allows savoring God. Therefore, John describes the mystical union with God as "the transformation of the soul in God through love."[72]

The person has the experience of God because they together have one love. It is love which enters the soul through the contemplation (inflow of God), transforms the person uniting him or her with God. As a result, God loves himself in the person with love that suits him as the Absolute. If at the beginning the mind and its acts of

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68   John of the Cross, "The Living Flame of Love" I,23.
69   John of the Cross, "The Spiritual Canticle" 14–15,15.
70   John of the Cross, "The Spiritual Canticle" 37,1.
71   John of the Cross, "The Dark Night" II,18,5.
72   John of the Cross, "The Ascent of the Mount Carmel" I,2,4.

faith was the guide for all human activity, now it is love which guides both the mind and the memory, which profit from the proximity with God caused by love.

> When there is union of love, the image of the Beloved is so sketched in the will, and drawn so intimately and vividly, that it is true to say that the Beloved lives in the lover and the lover in the Beloved. Love produces such likeness in this transformation of lovers that one can say each is the other and both are one. The reason is that in the union and transformation of love each gives possession of self to the other and each leaves and exchanges self for the other.[73]

John of the Cross expresses this amorous attitude in spousal terminology: man or woman is the bride, and God (or Christ) is the bridegroom. John says that the person becomes divinized, because God provides the only light to the mind, he becomes the only possession of the memory and also he is the one, who loves God in the person.[74]

2.7. The Soul-Body Renewed Relationship

One of the requirements of the mystical union is the total God-centeredness. Therefore, the role of the body and of the senses must be reversed. Previously, the soul depended on the stuff provided by the senses. The impulses come from the material world. Only later can the mind think and the will can decide. Now, in the state of the mystical union, the direction of acting is contrary. God is the one who directly touches the soul in contemplation. And so, all the first motions in the soul come from him. From here the motions go further to the body, which in accordance with its nature participates in the spiritual goods, that come with the direct inflow of God in the soul. This reversed psychological dynamicity takes place in the purified and united with God person. Every movement begins from God and the last instance, which receives divine impulses through the soul, is the body. Now every part of the human person is God-centered. The split, which took place in humans after the original sin, is overcome now. The person acquires total freedom, which is engaged in the love of God. The person is elevated to a higher level of his or her humanity, enhanced by the divine, direct presence of God. The union is the divinization of the person, but still the longing to see the essence of God remains in him or her, therefore the fulfillment of this mystical union will take place after death.

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73 John of the Cross, "The Spiritual Canticle" 12,7.
74 John of the Cross, "The Ascent of Mount Carmel" III,2,8–9.

3. Comparison

The crucial area, which creates the most interpretative difficulties, dwells around the notion of emptiness/nothingness (*nada*, *sunyata*). Therefore, I have examined its meaning in both doctrines. As I stated in the introduction, the notion of emptiness has in both cases the experiential meaning, i.e. it denotes the subjective impression of a person. Even though both doctrines use more or less similar experiential vocabulary, their objective meaning is different.

John uses this term in the context of the person's transition from the natural to supernatural sphere, which aims at God. Generally speaking, nothingness – *nada* – indicates, among others, the subjective feeling of emptiness, which appears while the respective objects of the senses and of the spiritual faculties are being substituted either by God or by something which leads to him. The final effect of this substitution is the enhancement of the person, who through this transformation becomes an adequate partner of God in amorous relationship.[75] For John, the person is valuable in themselves. Therefore, there must be always an object in his or her faculties, because this is a somatic, psychologic and spiritual requirement of the person. Which means that there is no objective vacuum in a person approaching God spiritually.[76]

In Zen, we have a different understanding of the term "emptiness." The person undergoes spiritual transformation of consciousness from the illusion of an independent, ego-centered substantial individual self, to the transcendental, thought-free mind as unique, all-inclusive reality, where there is no determinateness or limits (*sunyata*-emptiness). This is why Zen masters want to extinguish the mental activity of the illusory individual self, putting it into the state of inactivity, because when active, it hinders the experience of the ultimate reality. The mind has to be void of notions. In the state of awakening, the consciousness of individuality disappears, for the sake of oneness of the indefinite, ultimate reality.

3.1. Emptiness Chosen as a Means of Approaching the Ultimate Reality

Now we can analyze the practical role of emptiness in the spiritual path that both doctrines adopt. The difference is subtle but significant.

3.1.1. Emptying of the Senses

According to John of the Cross, during the active purification of the sensual sphere it is freed only from the disordered attachments. The feeling of being empty comes from the habits one has. Practically, it means that one is void of joy produced by

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[75] Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 180.

[76] As Jakov Mamić (*San Giovanni della Croce*, 179) noted: "il «Vuoto» di Giovanni della Croce, nella sua più assoluta entità, è la presenza di Dio trascendente."

the disordered attachments, if one rejects the object of attachment. Therefore, there is the sensation of vacuum one experiences. Objectively, there are other goods in the senses.

3.1.2. Emptying of the Mind and Other Faculties

The constant attitude that the person must have is living in faith. The content of faith is composed of notions and images. Faith gives some positively formulated knowledge about God. This transition from the anthropomorphically conceived God to the one presented in faith, expressed in a general and darkened way, also causes some feeling of vacuum and darkness. If one was attached to emotions during prayer, now, when the affections extinguished and there is only God in the faculties, to whom one is not used to, the sensation of emptiness and dryness appears. On the other hand, we have to remember that for John, the key point of reference of Christian faith is one's personal relationship with Christ.[77] Therefore, there is never a state of objective emptiness in the mind.

Some authors are tempted to make out of the content of faith something as abstract as the "cloud of unknowing."[78] Because of the aforementioned arguments, it is an incorrect interpretation of John's doctrine.[79] Faith is followed by supernatural hope and love. They also have concrete contents of their acts, since they aim at the object presented by faith.

And finally, we have to realize that this effort is done not to reach the emptiness of the faculties but to imitate Christ, the way he lived.[80] "First, you have habitual desire to imitate Christ in all your deeds by bringing your life into conformity with his. You must then study his life to know how to imitate him and how to behave in all situations as he would."[81]

3.1.3. Emptying or Putting into Inactivity the Faculties during Meditation

As regards the transition from meditation to passive contemplation, John says that as long as God is not really acting in the senses, they should be active finding some object of meditation in order not to fall into vacuum. Only when God is in them in the contemplation, one should stop meditation not to hinder God's activity. It also means that there is no meditation with no object in the doctrine of the saint.[82]

Summing up, John talks in the aforementioned context about moments of switching from one object to another with a subjective sensation of *nada*. As soon as one

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[77] Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 90–91.
[78] Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 94–96.
[79] Cf. Ruiz, "Unidad y contrastes," 46.
[80] Gaitán, "Subida del Monte Carmelo," 398–399.
[81] John of the Cross, "The Ascent of Mount Carmel" I,13,3.
[82] John of the Cross, "The Ascent of Mount Carmel" II,13,2–5.

learns what the new object is, the sensation of emptiness vanishes. We can say that his or her faculties are either actively or passively receptive, and there is no void in them.

Something contrary to John's strategy takes place in *zazen* – the meditational method of Zen. This method aims to put the faculties at complete inoperativeness through the elimination of every object that could keep them busy, either actively or passively.[83] They must be empty and inactive not to confirm the false reality of the self and of the beings, otherwise they consolidate the state of illusion, affecting the awakening to the true nature.[84]

If in John of the Cross there is either activity or passive receptiveness of the human faculties, in Zen there is either activity or temporal inoperativeness, which is contrary to the passive receptiveness.[85] In this case, nothingness in Zen is not only an experiential expression, but objective one, too. As Chong Hun Choi observes, "Thus, contrary to the discursive characteristics of John's meditation, Dogen's meditation is characterized as «not-thinking.» Dogen's not-thinking is essentially the negation of all mental acts."[86]

If the essence of prayer for Catholics is to be Christocentric, and Zen meditation is objectless, we must state that these two forms of relating to the ultimate reality are disjunctive.[87] If somebody uses the term "Christian Zen meditation," they use the expression contradictory in itself because meditation can be disjunctively either Christian (Christocentric), or *zazen* (without an object). In this context, it is impossible to agree with Santiago Guerra and Ana María Schlüter Rodés that we can talk about a kind of prayer without an object in the spirituality of John of the Cross.[88] It is also misleading to say that the climate of emptying is the same in both doctrines.[89]

3.2. Apophatis and Agnosticism – The Ultimate Reality as Nothingness

In this section, we intend to analyze the consequences of transcendence of the ultimate reality in both doctrines. They are epistemological and semantic.

Thomas Merton writes:

> a spiritual guide worth his salt will conduct a ruthless campaign against all forms of delusion arising out of spiritual ambition and self-complacency which aim to establish the ego in spiritual glory. That is why St. John of the Cross is so hostile to visions, ecstasies and all

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83   Cf. Kalupahana, *A History of Buddhist Philosophy*, 230–231.
84   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 271.
85   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 353.
86   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 250.
87   Cf. Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 214; 249–250; Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 158.
88   Guerra, "Zen y Juan de la Cruz," 1561; Schlüter Rodés, *Zendo Betania*, 21, n. 8.
89   Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 189, 191.

forms of "special experience." That is why the Zen Masters say: "If you meet the Buddha, kill him."[90]

This statement of Merton points out among other things that it is impossible to find an exact representation that corresponds to the ultimate reality.

The two spiritual ways presented above agree that the ultimate reality is both inconceivable and ineffable, which means it transcends the notions and words, because they are inadequate both to approach it and later on to express it. Even though the two doctrines coincide at this point, they differ in the degree of inconceivableness and ineffability.

1. For John, the ultimate reality is God that has essence, attributes and is three persons. He is a determinate supreme being. For Zen masters, the ultimate reality has no essence, i.e. is indefinite, indeterminate, undifferentiated and unsubstantial.

In John's doctrine, the mystical experience of God is contemplation, which is an inflow of God in the person. This experience is mostly dark and general in this life but not void of contents, because we can even know mystically – in a general and darkened way – the attributes of God. After death, the person will see the essence of God clearly, i.e. with details.

This inflow of God in contemplation causes in the senses and in the spiritual faculties the feeling of dryness, of darkness or of having lost God, etc., because the means one relies on are anthropomorphic and cannot be used as means through which one unites with God. Therefore, in the person the inflow of God causes the removal of all that is not him.

In Zen, the mystical experience of the ultimate reality (*satori*) is void of definite contents. Objectively, it is an experience of the oneness of reality, but as such it is indefinite. It is an experience of the unity of the ultimate reality. Everything that we know as individual beings is this reality, and it is void of individual essence and substantiality.

Summing up, according to John, we experience God who is a person in a dark way. The darkness gradually softens. In Zen, in the mystical experience there is only all-inclusive impersonal mind as unique cosmic reality, with no details concerning its nature.

2. There is no essential similarity between God and the creatures, but John acknowledges some inessential similarity between them. There are "traces" of God in beings. We can use them, at least in the beginning, to approach God. In Zen, the world is an illusion. Beings have illusory essence and substantiality. Therefore, there is no similarity between the ultimate reality and the world. We have to reject beings on the way of approaching the ultimate reality.

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90   Merton, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*, 76–77.

For John, God reveals some mysteries about himself in a human language, and this is the Christian revelation. Thanks to the revelation we know indirectly who God is, in a general and dimmed way. As seen by John, this revelation is certain (infallible) and true, although it is just indirect knowledge of God. Thus, for him God is not totally inconceivable for our mind. This knowledge is sufficient to unite with him, because mysticism is something additional in the human way to God. In Zen, there is no indication about the ultimate reality unless one experiences it, and there is no revelation of the ultimate reality; thus, we are either mystics or agnostics.

3. From John's point of view, our talking about God actually corresponds to his reality but not to his essence. Thus, we can express something true about God after the mystical experience has finished.[91] In Zen, there is no correspondence between our words and the ultimate reality.[92] Any description of the ultimate reality is putting a curb on something which is indistinctive. For example, "[it] is impossible to say in Zen that the ultimate reality is personal God as Christians understand it, because it introduces some negation to the ultimate reality."[93] The only thing Zen dares say about the ultimate reality is that it is absolute thought-free mind. Saying that *sunyata* is infinite, eternal, unchanging and without thoughts, we do not say anything about it that would describe it and thus delimit it. We just say what it is not. I think that to say that Buddha-nature is mind in Zen means that there are no space-temporal boundaries of the ultimate reality, and everything is oneness, totally transparent to itself.

The ineffability of the ultimate reality is a point of view, according to which we cannot express this reality with words. And here again there is a difference between both doctrines. For John, there is a real and not just symbolic correspondence between the ultimate reality and human language, thus a mystic can really say something about what he experienced. For him the ineffability of God is not total, and we cannot say that John is an enthusiast of apophasis. If apophasis is a view according to which we cannot affirm anything positive about God, John finds a certain and true way to know God in faith.

Here too, the Zen's point of view is different. For Zen masters, the only possible way of expression of the ultimate reality is silence.[94] There is no correspondence between the words and the ultimate reality. It leads to apophasis in Zen.

As a sum of the aforementioned analysis, let us quote Choi: "John, for example, maintained a similar distinction between ratio, the knowledge of natural truths, and *intellectus*, the wisdom which gazes upon supernatural truths. John could thus intelligibly speak of the development of a new «organ» of mystical insight. Dogen regards ordinary thinking as deluded and productive only of suffering, and illusion."[95]

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91   Cf. John of the Cross, "The Living Flame of Love" II,21.
92   Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 172–173.
93   Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 176.
94   Cf. Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 283.
95   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 349.

For John in, the mystical experience, which is not void of contents, we taste what we believe in. In Zen, there is either illusion or mystical undifferentiated gazing.

3.3. The Final Result of the Spiritual Development: Mystical Union vs *satori*

The last key area I want to examine is the scope, to which both spiritual ways dealing with the notion of emptiness lead.

1. For John, the spiritual journey to the union with God begins, because God wants it for the sake of the person. His amorous luring corresponds to the ontological structure of the person. The luring of God creates in the person the desire to have an amorous relationship with him. Only then does the person reach personal fulfillment. Another desire that John mentions is to see the essence of God. Consequently, this spiritual journey is not seeking for the true self or knowledge but for true love and definitive meeting.[96] This desire is reciprocal.[97] According to John, the union with God first of all has to do with the moral perfection of the person. Again, the imitation of Christ and spousal relationship with him plays an essential role here. This is the ultimate context, in which *nada* has to be understood.

After having reached the mystical union with God, the person is still ontologically separated from the ultimate reality and remains in its ontological integrity. Even though the person is transformed by God and seems to be like him, John explicitly states that it is impossible to become God because of the ontological gap. Therefore, those who try to find same traces of panentheism in the doctrine of John of the Cross are wrong.[98] For John, the only criterion of the similarity between God and a person is love. As the final result of the spiritual transformation, the person in his or her spiritual and bodily dimension is totally God-centered, and there is nothing that hinders this God-centeredness of the entire person. Therefore, expressing John's *nada* (emptiness/nothingness) in other words, we could say that "there must be only God or something, which leads to him in the faculties and in the senses, and nothing else."

In the Zen Buddhism perspective, there is only the ultimate, indefinite reality, void of substantiality and essence, i.e. impersonal thoughts-free transcendental mind.[99] Its oneness and lack of determinateness is the key perspective, which allows us to understand the role of emptiness in Zen. There is also the state of suffering of the individual self, caused by ignorance, which consists in the unawareness of the oneness of the reality. Thus, in Zen – as it is in Buddhism – the reason to begin a spiritual journey is suffering.

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96 Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 310.
97 Mamić, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 167–168; Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 214.
98 Panentheism is an ontological view, according to which the world is a necessary part of God's nature. If we understand panentheism in this way, there is neither pantheism nor panentheism in the doctrine of John of the Cross. Choi in this respect is a bit unclear (Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 102, 324, 338–340).
99 Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 228–229.

The state of illusion comes from the mental activity and ego-centeredness of the individual self. The way out is to stop it. Therefore, the desired state is the non-thinking one. The mind must be objectively empty. The emptiness of the mind is also desired due to the void of the determinateness of the ultimate reality. The final result of awareness reached in enlightenment is the oneness of the thought-free transcendental mind. Then the true, unmoved, boundless, undifferentiated, beyond time and space, all-inclusive self becomes what it has always has been – the only reality. Consequently, we have to state that in Zen emptiness is a tool through which the person overcomes illusion (putting the mind in the state of inactivity) and becomes what he or she truly is (*sunyata* – void-of-essence reality). Thus, in Zen it is all about reaching the true identity attained through the dissolution of the empirical self in the transcendental mind.[100]

As the final conclusion, we can repeat what we have already said: there must be no-object meditation in Zen, and there cannot be the same type of meditation or contemplation in John's doctrine.

2. There is yet another consequence. According to Zen, when a person comes back from the state of *satori*, they know their true nature. What remains is the cosmic love to other sentient beings, because the person knows that everything is one reality. In this case, love is another name for the metaphysical oneness of the undifferentiated reality. It also means that this love is impersonal. Contrary to this, for John of the Cross, the love that one reaches is understood as participation in the divine love, i.e. giving oneself entirely as a gift to others for the sake that they also may achieve the amorous relationship with God. This leads to the conclusion that both spiritual doctrines talk about love, but understood it differently and as somehow dissimilar, as some authors would suggest.[101] A Zen practitioner helps others to overcome the illusion of the individual self, i.e. to overcome the notion of the person. John's understanding of love aims to reinforce the other in his or her spiritual and ontological personal identity in order to answer God's luring to love him.

Conclusion

Certainly, there are some general similitudes between both doctrines, like meditation, detachment, ethical virtues, personal experience instead of reasoning or the experience of emptiness. But when we come to the details, the differences are fundamental due to the different understanding of the ultimate reality. The metaphysical difference between Christian God and Buddha-nature is more than essential. The impersonal

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[100]   Choi, *A Comparative Study*, 229; 354.
[101]   Guerra, "Zen y Juan de la Cruz," 1561–1562.

and unsubstantial ultimate reality excludes the personal and substantial one and *vice versa* since they are understood as ultimate. Consequently, adepts of both spiritual ways want to achieve something effectively different, at some level using methods that exclude each other. In this comparison, no wonder, *nada* and *sunyata* refer to something different even though there is a point of convergence, which is the subjective feeling of vacuum. For these reasons, this feeling objectively means something different in both systems.

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Verbum Vitae

Anxiety and Salvation. A Soteriological Miniature

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Abstract: Inspired both by the phenomenological thought of Karol Tarnowski and Józef Tischner and the personalist theology of Czeslaw Bartnik, the article fits into contextual soteriology which deliberately uses the method of correlation. The aim of this article is to present the Christian meaning of salvation in the context of one of the most moving existential experiences, that is the experience of anxiety (*Angst*). The indelible phenomenon of anxiety raises important soteriological questions: Who or what can bring the fullness of salvation to men and women? In what circumstances is the experience of salvation possible to the human being who is called an "anxious existence"? The first part of the article shows the essential difference between anxiety and fear (in contrast to fear, the matter of anxiety is real but indeterminate). The second part presents an ambivalent character of anxiety (anxiety can lead to despair or to salvation) and human attempts to overcome anxiety through falling into an inauthentic existence (a utopia of "salvation by fashion"). The third part characterizes an "eschatological conscience" (a conscience filled with anxiety of tragic finality) and its antithesis in the form of a "soteriological conscience" (a conscience which is open to the possibility of salvation coming from God). The last part of the article argues that the phenomenon of authentic interpersonal encounter is a necessary condition to experience the salvation coming from God in Christ.

Keywords: anxiety, salvation, existence, eschatological conscience, soteriological conscience, encounter

Salvation is an important category in Christian theology, the latter understood after St. Anselm of Canterbury as "faith seeking understanding" (*fides quaerens intellectum*). Contemporary soteriology, however, does not seek to create some "theory" of the Divine Savior, but has more practical aspirations. It is seeking an answer to the question: how is salvation "here and now" possible in the conditions of alienated human existence? Soteriology wants to be a credible and existentially moving interpretation of human fate in terms of God's promise of salvation. For this reason, in contrast to scholastic approaches, it takes the form of a hermeneutic of human experience, constructed in the context of the Divine Revelation contained both in the Bible and Christian Tradition.

As a result of the hermeneutic turn, the method of correlation proposed by Paul Tillich has been gaining more and more interest in the post-conciliar theology. The method consists in the interrelation of two inseparable planes: the existential situation of man and the broadly understood Christian experience which includes both the perception and the ecclesial interpretation of the Divine Revelation in the history of Christianity. Soteriology built on the mutual correlation of the above-mentioned

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aspects can become a serious response to the important problems of contemporary people: a reflection that updates the Christian message, and a thought that is close and kind to human existence immersed in a long history of suffering.

The purpose of this article is to present the Christian meaning of salvation in the context of one of the most poignant existential experiences, i.e. the experience of anxiety (*Angst*). It is impossible to reasonably consider the essence of salvation in isolation from human existence which is always tragic in a way: alienated and fearful, but at the same time constantly looking for ways to be saved. To talk about salvation without reflecting on the condition of "an anxious man" would be, to use the words of Czesław Miłosz, a tedious process of "building the stairway of abstraction."[1]

In terms of its structure and content, the article is part of the theology "from below," which is by definition metadogmatic, aspect-oriented, anti-systemic and complementary to systematic theology. The innovative nature of the article manifests itself in the use of a contextual approach. Contrary to numerous systemic (top-down) approaches, the starting point in this article is not the analysis of the Church's dogmatic propositions on the essence of salvation, but the interpretation of the existential experience of anxiety, on the basis of which important soteriological questions arise: Why can contemporary man be called "an anxious existence"? What is the difference between anxiety and fear? What is the "revelatory" nature of anxiety? What is the role of experiencing anxiety in the search for transcendent salvation? Why does the experience of salvation need space for a personal encounter?

Inspired both by the phenomenological thought of Józef Tischner and Karol Tarnowski, and the personalistic theology of Czesław Bartnik, existential soteriology presented in the article tries to answer the above questions convincingly. Bringing together philosophical anthropology and theology, it can provide a valuable introduction to further detailed research in systematic soteriology. Existential thinking seems to be an ally of theology. Its addressees are contemporary alienated people. Living in the present social and cultural situation which can be called after Martin Buber "the eclipse of God,"[2] they are looking for salvation.

1. Fear and Anxiety as the Context for Contemporary Soteriology

In the exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, John Paul II indicated numerous phenomena characteristic of our era, both positive and negative. Among the disturbing "signs of the times" (*signa temporis*) he indicated the phenomenon of modern man's fear of the future. According to the pope, the main cause of this fear is the loss of Christian

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1   Miłosz, *Poezje*, 318.
2   See: Buber, *Eclipse of God*.

memory, manifested in abandoning the heritage of faith. It necessarily leads to practical agnosticism, religious and moral indifference, spiritual emptiness and sorrow caused by the squandering of Christian heritage handed down in history.

The vision of the future is colorless and uncertain, and as a result, people are afraid of the future more than they actually want it. In pope's description of the negative "signs of the times" there is a conviction about the actual fragmentation of human existence, about the domination of the feeling of loneliness despite prosperity, about increasing interpersonal divisions, as well as ethnic and inter-religious conflicts, about the escalation of racist attitudes, and about the disappearance of solidarity in favor of the absolutization of selfish individualism, which leads to the isolation of individuals and groups concerned only with their own interests and privileges. Among the numerous factors causing the fear of the future, John Paul II points to the ambivalent phenomenon of globalization, which, instead of supporting the longed-for unity of humanity, may, contrary to expectations, lead to the marginalization of the weak and the ever greater pauperization of societies.[3]

The concept of fear appears in the papal interpretation of the human condition (*conditio humana*), referring to specific phenomena that can be identified, explained and classified. The numerous "faces of fear" correspond to particular negative events, situations, actions and/or tendencies that might be considered as direct or indirect causes of fear instilled in humans. It seems that the removal or a significant reduction of the impact of a given cause will translate directly into the elimination of some forms of fear which plague modern humanity.

Referring to some aspects of Martin Heidegger's philosophy, contextual soteriology makes an essential distinction between fear (*Furcht*) and anxiety (*Angst*). While fear relates to something particular, anxiety always relates to the totality of being. Both fear and anxiety have their real object: some "about" or "for something." The essential difference, however, is that the object of anxiety, as opposed to fear, is characterized by indeterminacy: it is the whole world that becomes completely indefinite, that is, it loses all substance and meaning. Man is anxious about the world as such.[4] Heidegger says, "The world in which I exist has sunk into insignificance; and the world which is thus disclosed is one in which entities can be freed only in the character of having no involvement."[5] Anxiety is a typically human reality, available only to man as part of his existential experience. It does not come to him from the outside, but is an inherent element of human existence. Søren Kierkegaard wrote that "Because [a person] is a synthesis [of the infinite and the finite], he can be in anxiety; and the more profoundly he is in anxiety, the greater is the man – yet not in

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3   Cf. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, no. 8. On the meaning of time in Christian theology see also: Barth, "Czas w teologii," 368–371.

4   Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 394–395.

5   Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 393.

the sense usually understood, in which anxiety is about something external, about something outside a person, but in the sense that he himself produces the anxiety."[6]

According to Heidegger, anxiety is the basic human mood, along with astonishment and boredom. By mood he means a certain primal and permanent state-of-mind that in general makes it possible to experience reality as such. Human existence is in its essence "being-in-the-world" (*In-der-Welt-Sein*) and at the same time "being-with" others (*Mitsein*).[7] Hence, mood is the basic type of human openness to the entire world. It is man's constant disposition towards the totality of being, and a way of opening the human being (*Dasein*) to reality. Thanks to anxiety, man is confronted with the bare fact of his own existence and with the fact of the existence of a world that is different from the human being. However, it should be remembered that, contrary to popular understanding, the world, according to Heidegger, is not an ordinary set of all things, but a whole system of references that define the being of all that is. In this unconventional approach, the world is the being of all things: it is what makes all things possible at all.[8]

It should be emphasized that anxiety has the ability only to reveal nothingness. It has no power to generate nothingness. Man is anxious about the world understood as a total being (totality of things) which always "evades" and "slips from" him. Hence, anxiety withdraws from the world understood as the totality of connections of all that is. In a situation of anxiety, man is somehow suspended in his usual relation to the world. The relation consists in encountering a specific being that is convenient and possible to control and to use. This being is already predetermined. It has its sense and significance as a thing in the midst of an infinite and diverse multiplicity of beings. Anxiety makes man experience the world in its entirety as nothingness, i.e. as something that ceases to be obvious and thus loses all meaning.[9]

Revealing the world's nothingness through anxiety does not mean the negation of being; it merely shows its indeterminancy. An anxious being loses its footing in a world that turns out to be fragile and insignificant. Being within the world no longer has any meaning for man, and the world as a whole collapses within itself, ceasing to be a safe place. Consequently, anxiety is powerless in the face of the totality of the world and withdraws from it. However, this withdrawal is not a desperate escape, but is characterized by a kind of "preserved calm" which makes it possible to reveal nothingness along with being in its entirety.[10]

While Heidegger believes that anxiety reveals the nothingness of the world, Kierkegaard argues that anxiety reveals distinct possibilities that freedom offers to man. Contrary to popular belief, however, possibility is a category heavier than

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6   Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 155.
7   Stapleton, "Dasein as Being-in-the-World," 44–56.
8   Michalski, "Heidegger: filozof i czas," 62, 56–69.
9   Łojek, "Co ujawniają nastroje?," 42.
10   Łojek, "Co ujawniają nastroje?," 41.

reality. The power of possibility combined with freedom can lead to complete dominance over the individual, especially in the case of people without integrity and faith. The power of human possibility is terrifying. Consequently, anxiety about possibilities turns out to be more powerful than the anxiety about people or other finitenesses. It is similar to a web man is drawn into. Salvation can only take place when anxiety brings man to faith understood here in Hegelian terms as "an inner certainty that anticipates infinity."[11] In Kierkegaard's interpretation, anxiety resembles a teacher bringing up a pupil who is constantly consumed with a sense of guilt. Anxiety without faith leads inevitably to drowning in the misery of the finite. However, if joined with faith, it can even become a means of salvation, and a guide on the way leading to "repose in Providence."[12]

2. Ambivalence of Anxiety and Attempts to Desensitize Fears

Being flooded with information about numerous dangers provokes three basic reactions in modern people: (1) denial of the existence of threats, (2) escape into an inauthentic way of being, or (3) bold adoption of an authentic way of being. The first reaction is expressed in the persistent denial of the factual reality that threatens man with the loss of life, blocking personal development or an extreme decline in the field of morality and axiology. Denial of the threats leads to a state of apparent peace that requires man to be constantly in a state of illusion. People who suppress the truth about dangers reach the level of infantile perception of reality, in which even the most tragic events are perceived as irreducible elements of the adventure of life, the latter identified with a fairy tale.

The second reaction consists in allaying fears and silencing existential anxiety, which are served by what Heidegger called the inauthentic way of being a man *thrown into the world*. The concept of throwing indicates a situation in which man finds himself regardless of his will.[13] Inauthentic being is expressed in a specific dispersion of the human being in the sphere of one's duties, acts and activities, as well as in being influenced in one's judgments by the general public opinion. The inauthentic way of being is fostered by the broadly understood influence of other – human and non-human – factors that lead to a situation in which human life is lived somehow outside himself, in a mindless submission to the imposed patterns.[14] On the linguistic level, the inauthentic way of being is expressed by the (reflexive) pronoun

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11   Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 157.
12   Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, 161.
13   Piecuch, "Mistrz Heidegger," 117.
14   Piecuch, "Mistrz Heidegger," 124.

"one(self)" or "it" (*das Man*). The inauthentic way of being is therefore manifested by such expressions as "one does/it is done," "one works/it is worked," "one thinks that/it is thought that," etc. In an inauthentic state, man lives not as he would like to, but as "one lives/it is lived" in the circle of others.[15] As a result, man becomes more and more unlike himself in his existence, i.e. he becomes a being without properties, and more of a copy than an original. Under the influence of "one/it" (*das Man*), which is the fundamental aspect of human existence and the source phenomenon belonging to the human being (*Dasein*), man's sense of responsibility becomes blurred. An autonomous and responsible act of an individual is then reduced to an inauthentic manner of acting according to patterns imposed by society, party, clan, criminal group, or political correctness. Individual responsibility is replaced with collective responsibility. It leads to "the real dictatorship of the *they*."[16]

One of the factors that aim to desensitize fears by reinforcing an inauthentic way of being is *fashion*. Supported by the power of advertising, it is one of the most dynamic and seductive phenomena.[17] Due to the unstoppable sequence of self-propelling changes, fashion is sometimes compared to a "perpetual motion machine" (*perpetuum mobile*). It effectively introduces the mad rush for constant change into the life of modern societies. Fashion creates awareness in which any attempt to uniform clothes, ways of thinking, creating and behaving, is sometimes perceived as the greatest danger to social life. Many researchers claim that fashion perfectly reflects the features of modern culture, such as pace, changeability and temporariness (cf. Wojciech Burszta, Paul Virilio, Jean Baudrillard, Anthony Giddens, Lars Svedsen, Tomáš Halík).

As observed by Georg Simmel, the increasing speed of fashion development is powered by the painful confrontation of two opposing needs: security consisting in the unification of an individual with a specific social group, and individualization consisting in separating an individual from the human mass.[18] The tension between the desire to be like others and the striving for uniqueness generates powerful social emotions, triggers the fever of having the most fashionable things and leads to the obsession with change. The obsession with getting rid of what is already obsolete, in favor of what is the newest, constitutes in modern people a strong will to power, which pushes individuals into following blindly the avant-garde of fashion, giving rise to the compulsion to be trendy at all costs. The exhausting pursuit of fashion seems to be a therapeutic utopia in today's society metaphorically referred to as "hunter society."[19] However, it does not solve people's problems, but only temporarily desensitizes suffering, making people sad slaves of the present.

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15   Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 149–150.
16   Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164.
17   See: Pawłowska-Jądrzyk, *Zarys poetyki uwodzenia*.
18   *Simmel*, "The *Philosophy of Fashion*," 187–206.
19   Bauman, *Kultura w płynnej nowoczesności*, 37–42.

Unlike earlier utopias which promise rest and happiness after life's hardships and sacrifices, modern utopia professed by the "consumer society" does not foreshadow any end to effort or journey, but boldly announces the endlessness of human action to solve the painful problems of the human condition. It does not offer a cure for social ills in the distant future, but perversely suggests the possibility of achieving happiness in the present: in endless "hunts" aimed at acquiring things promoted by fashion designers.[20] The utopia of "salvation through fashion" is extremely danger-ous, as it leads people into the trap of participation in endless games. It forces them to run in a race without the finishing line; and finally, it justifies a selfish lifestyle in which ruthless competition becomes the main rule of conduct. The illusion of happi-ness promised in the never-ending pursuit keeps today's "bargain hunters" from giv-ing up on their utopian venture. Pulling out of the race would be perceived by other participants as a cowardly desertion and would lead to social exclusion. The price for remaining in the system of chasing fashion amounts to the loss of the ability to pose fundamental questions about the meaning of life, the effects of existential alienation caused by sin, the possibility of temporal and eternal salvation, and finally about the way of meeting the Divine Savior in the conditions of existential alienation.

The third human reaction to threats and dangers consists in trying to be au-thentic in the world. Authenticity takes the truth about human mortality seriously. It requires courage to think about death understood by Heidegger as "the possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all."[21] "Being-towards-death" (*Sein-zum-Tode*) is a continual rush (*Vorlaufen*) towards loss (*Vorbei*), i.e. heading towards the inevi-table possibility of death, which is the most personal, absolute and ultimate.[22] While for Levinas the being of a human is a being against the violence of death and a way to evade death in its closeness, for Heidegger "being-towards-death" is a being towards nothingness that causes anxiety.[23] The experience of anxiety as the basic mood of a man *thrown-into-the-world* is an opportunity to reflect on the truth revealed in this experience. Anxiety enables insight into the truth about oneself. It conditions the discovery of the phenomenon of freedom, the originality of which consists in the fact that man can choose himself. He has the ability to constantly go beyond himself, to design the possibilities of both his own being and the being of things encountered in the world. In anxiety, man realizes the burden of freedom: that it is identical with the burden of his own being from which he wants to escape. The es-cape, which consists in departing from the possibility of "being oneself," leads to an attitude of everyday inauthenticity. It is an existential movement of falling (*Ver-fallen*) into mediocrity.[24]

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20   Bauman, *Kultura w płynnej nowoczesności*, 43–44.
21   Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 307.
22   Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 294.
23   Mech, "Heidegger i Levinas o śmierci," 145.
24   Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 264.

Experiencing anxiety, man learns the truth of his own being, which is the experience of his own contingency. In a moment of anxiety, all ties with the world are severed and man can discover the importance of being thus far experienced as a void, i.e. a lack of a sense of objective meaning that would support and fill this being. Anxiety reveals to man the fact that in the encounter with nothingness, he discovers himself as a creative being. Something may arise in him, as it were, out of nothingness, but at the same time, every possibility may turn into nothingness. It is anxiety that reveals the fundamental alternative: the actualization of possibilities or their annihilation.[25]

The ambiguity of existential anxiety is expressed in the fact that man can either accept the state of his original "metaphysical homelessness" and remain faithful to it, or he can constantly seek an escape from himself.[26] Anxiety in itself is morally indifferent and ambivalent. It can awaken or put to sleep human desire to go beyond the state of tragic reality. Recognizing the truth that "being-in-the-world" (*Dasein*) is "being-towards-death" (*Sein-zum-Tode*), man can, however, freely accept his finitude, temporality, changeability and mortality, without having to negate the possibility of discovering the transcendent meaning that comes to us as salvation-from-God. Since all human being is permeated with both life and continuous dying, death should no longer be understood as an event at the end of life. It is rather the end of temporality which deeply penetrates and shapes human being. The experience of transience, of the fragility of our being and of the irreversibility of the passing time, raises the fundamental question about the meaning of our being. Is it, as suggested by Heidegger, the temporality of our being? Can an anxious human existence accept more than the inevitable possibility of one's own death? Can man open himself to the possibility/hope of meeting the Divine Savior who brings liberation from the state of despair caused by a growing sense of anxiety and fear?

If we assume that anxiety can be experienced by man as an existential shock, then guided by the principle of bias-free thinking, we should not exclude *a priori* the possibility of the transgression of purely naturalistic interpretations concerning the fragility of our being. Theistic interpretation of one's own finitude opens to thinking in the spirit of hope, allowing man to escape from himself to the absolute possibility of *salvation-in-God.* We cannot definitely deny that in specific situations – referred to by Karl Jaspers as borderline – human spirit will begin to listen to the subtle voice that comes from the depths of human conscience but has its ultimate source in the absconding God (*Deus absconditus*). If it is true that anxiety prompts us to listen carefully to the voice of conscience, then it cannot be ruled out that a person may make a decision to seek transcendent meaning of life beyond what has been called the temporality of human existence. Perhaps in the shocking experience of anxiety,

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25   Piecuch, "Mistrz Heidegger," 124.
26   Piecuch, "Mistrz Heidegger," 126.

a thought similar to the psalmist's confession will appear in the mind of a modern man: "God is our shelter, our strength, ever ready to help in time of trouble, so we shall not be afraid when the earth gives way, when mountains tumble into the depths of the sea" (Ps 46:3).

3. From "Eschatological" to "Soteriological" Conscience

Influenced by knowledge of contemporary threats, people develop "eschatological conscience." It is manifested, as claimed by Karol Tarnowski, in the feeling of losing the meaning of existence, in an acute experience of uncertainty and in fear of the victory of axiological nihilism, the vision of which hovers over human projects both in professional and everyday life. "Eschatological conscience" is associated with experiencing fear in the face of unimaginable destruction caused by the possibility of total annihilation, for instance, nuclear war, natural disasters, climate change, mass terrorism, pandemics, global hunger or lack of drinking water. The adjective "eschatological" used in the above expression indicates the possibility of a conscience oriented towards an undefined finality which is unfavorable for man and the natural environment, deadly for individuals and entire nations, and destructive to any aspect of reality (material, biological, mental, spiritual, cultural, ethical, axiological, or religious). The fear of specific threats turns into the anxiety over a vague sinister finality. Life with the irremovable view of the impending "final tragedy" escalates the anxiety which threatens to weaken man's ability to understand himself as "freedom towards values."[27]

Eschatological fear triggers a specific anthropological turn. The vision of man as a relatively free person, created in the image and likeness of God, is easily replaced with the concept of a man who is absolutely determined, subjected to the power of fate, and given over to capricious idols, such as power, fashion, technology, market, bureaucracy or ideology. At the same time, the sense of responsibility for the repair of the world that is doomed to inevitable destruction disappears. The meaning of human creativity aimed at a positive transformation of the world is radically questioned by the ambiguous concept of life as a Sisyphean task, in which absurdity and happiness embrace each other, and every human fate can be overcome with contempt.[28] In the language of traditional theology, the fear of eschatological catastrophe leads to the weakening of faith in the providential presence of God in the world, hope

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[27] Tarnowski, *Człowiek i transcendencja*, 75–77.
[28] See: Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*.

for the victory of grace over sin, and love as an unselfish gift of self to others. Loneliness, evil and selfishness then begin to dominate human existence.

"Eschatological conscience" is related to the experience of man's fragility, both in the ontic and axiological aspect. The threat of a total catastrophe extending over human existence does not nullify the good that exists in the world, nor does it extrapolate evil to the whole of reality, but only indicates the reality's contingency, fragility, destructibility, non-obviousness, ambiguity, and conditionality. In the situation of fear and anxiety, a specific paradox of fragility and power becomes more and more visible. Despite the impressive development of technology that confirms the power of intellect, will and deed, man is still susceptible to injury, endangered in the aspect of existence and realization of values, and wandering in the elements of falsehood, evil and ugliness. Weakness and power seem incompatible. However, they are not necessarily condemned to hostile separation. In Christian understanding, they form a dialectical polar structure. Within this framework, weakness is seen as an indispensable condition and the background for the manifestation of power. It is perceived as the environment for the growth of the power of good that overcomes evil, and finally as a fertile field for seeding the creative power of God's grace. This paradoxical dynamics was expressed by St. Paul in the concise statement: "My power is at its best in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9).

Being aware of the evil threatening human existence does not have to result in a decadent vision of the world. It can lead, *contra spem*, to the interpretation of human fate from the perspective of good, to the affirmation and multiplication of which a person feels called upon by the *synderesis* rule (good should be done and evil avoided). As part of the basic desire for good, man discovers, thanks to the intuition, the primal fact of being endowed by a Good greater than himself. The world, one's own being, the loved ones, and the cosmos seem to be the reality given, and freely received, in an incomprehensible act of the most generous donation.[29]

Faced with the experience of the gift, man comes to the conclusion that before he himself achieved the possibility of choosing a particular good, he had already been chosen by the Absolute Good, which is called the Triune God of Love in the personalistic language of Christian faith. Hence, human existence, anxious about the possibility of the final destruction, does not have to fall into nihilism that denies all values because of the possibility of their annihilation or replacement by anti-values. To be able to cease to exist at any moment in time does not therefore mean to be worthless. Man is not doomed to the apotheosis of nothingness in order to absolutize a hedonistic lifestyle, affirm the will to power, or justify the desire to control people and things.

Feeling anxious about the possibility of death (be that physical, social, or spiritual), man can open up to the metaphysical dimension, i.e. transcend, like Abraham,

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29   Tarnowski, *Człowiek i transcendencja*, 64.

his factual nature towards something/someone unknown. He is able to question the axiological desert of his own existence and decide to go beyond himself in search of sources of authentic life. The moment of self-transcendence can be called the beginning of the *exodus* of people enslaved by eschatological fear towards the promised land abound with the Divine generosity, freedom and peace. The beginning of the existential movement towards a fuller being is an expression of the deepest dream of a happy life, in which "Love and Loyalty now meet, Righteousness and Peace now embrace" (Ps 85:11). It is, above all, the effect of the mysterious work of the Giver of Life, who in the Christian tradition has been called the effective Intercessor (*Parakletos/Paraclete*).

It seems that a new system of entrustment is born in the *kairos* of the Divine inquiry into the existential misery of man. Heidegger's proposal to trust only one's own being and assume the role of a "shepherd" of one's own being is confronted with Christ's call to "put out into deep water" (Luke 5:4) and follow the "Good Shepherd" on the paths of human existence. Trusting oneself is not enough. Hence, it is replaced by the highest act of trust in the Savior. Human trust in Christ is a response to the words of his promise: "anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark; he will have the light of life" (John 8:12). Existential concern for being rises to a higher level: to that of caring for salvation, that is, for life "to the full" (John 10:10). In this way, the illusion of self-salvation is overcome, an existential awakening occurs, and there is a feeling of the approaching *kairos*: "Well, now is the favorable time; this is the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2). As a result, anxious man matures to the decision to go out to meet the Messiah who comes from God, and who brings salvation understood as liberation from the bondage of sin and as healing from existential wounds. The hope of saving an alienated, enslaved and anxious man is born anew.

The dreaded "eschatological conscience" is touched in its desperate helplessness by the healing "soteriological conscience," that is, by the firm conviction that salvation is possible even when purely calculative thinking leads man to a critical level of unbelief in both the possibility of change and its meaning. The very process of healing the anxious conscience is, however, long and complicated, because the experience of the real power of evil in the history of the world has resulted, as noticed by Tarnowski, in the stereotypical thinking about the necessary connection between evil and strength, and in associating good with weakness. Such thinking has become a source of extremely pessimistic visions of the world (late Max Scheler, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche), in which the existence of evil seems more real than the existence of good, and doing evil seems much easier than doing good.[30] Although the evil will to destroy values can lead to the enslavement of many human minds by means of an obsession with the irrational fight against the good, historical experience shows that there will always be people who manifest the heroic spirit of

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30   Tarnowski, *Człowiek i transcendencja*, 65.

rebellion and opposition to the tyranny of evil, to the absurd pseudo-culture promoting the alliance of evil with the will to reign, and to the attempts to justify negative liberty which is completely detached from truth and goodness. Such individuals can also appear in our era, in which the death of a culture based on sacrifice has been announced, as suggested by Gilles Lipovetsky.[31]

In the existential situation described above, human longing for the manifestation of the absolute power of good comes to the fore. It has nothing to do with the trivialization of evil, nor with the desire to retaliate for the wrongs suffered. The longing also does not want the "tyranny of good" to be imposed on man against his will. Instead, it is connected with the desire to meet, see and hear the living God, who is not only Good in Himself, i.e. transcendent, ineffable, and superior to being, but above all, who makes Himself known in the history of human existence as a good and benevolent Father. While the awareness of the eschatological threat strengthens people's sense of fear and anxiety about the destructive power of evil, "soteriological conscience" evokes hope for salvation, for the final victory of good, truth, love, holiness and mercy, thanks to the liberating presence of God in the history of the world. It is a subtle and, at the same time, the most credible hope because it is based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, in which the believers participate through the sacraments. It is a hope constantly animated by the work of the Holy Spirit, who initiates and supports the cooperation of people of good will with the saving grace of God, the Father generous with his mercy (Eph 2:4). While in the light of anxiety people can see the "nothingness" of the world and their own being, in the rays of soteriological hope Christians can already *hic et nunc* rejoice in the Lord's reign because, to some fragmentary but real extent, piles of evil accumulated in history "melt like wax at the coming of the Master of the world," and "shame on those who worship images, who take pride in their idols" (Ps 97:5,7).

4. Salvation and the "Sacrament" of Encounter

Hope for salvation, awakened in man in the context of existential threat, always remains fragile, and prone to the temptation of both passivity and practical unbelief. While passivity can be an ally of despair, unbelief becomes the mentor for naturalistic interpretations of the world. Therefore, the hope of being saved by God requires the support of genuine witnesses of salvation. Surrounded by numerous ideological propositions, contemporary man easily becomes a "master of suspicion" in relation to all theoretical soteriological projects. By participating in the "carnival of ideology," the alienated man of the postmodern era slowly loses the ability to think in terms of

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31   Lipovetsky, *L'ère du vide*, 327–328.

truth and falsehood, good and evil, guilt and responsibility. Replacing both the idea and the sense of guilt with various ideological phrases, such as "we are all guilty" or "everyone is responsible for the whole world" (Jean-Paul Sartre), inevitably leads, as Leszek Kołakowski warns, to blurring the meaning of guilt and responsibility. Meanwhile, the ability to feel guilty is not only a condition for being human, but also a condition for the art of distinguishing good from evil, and a condition for conversion (*metanoia*) and ultimately salvation.[32]

Contemporary people are looking for witnesses of salvation, that is, reliable subjects saved from existential oppression, who will confirm the realism of *salvation-from-God-in-Christ* proclaimed by Christian Churches. According to Tarnowski, authentic encounters with the witnesses of salvation play an important role in the act of opening up to the possibility of rising from existential failures,[33] for the testimony seems to speak more emphatically than any metaphysical speculation. Who are these witnesses of salvation? They are good people, that is, people who in the history of their lives have experienced, not without pain and hardship, the existential Passover, that is, the transition from "the horrible pit" and "the slough of the marsh" (Ps 40:3) to the land of the liberating presence of the transcendent Good. They are those who "walk in Yahweh's presence in the land of the living" (Ps 116:9) and prefer to "stand on the steps of God's house" because it "is better than living with the wicked" (Ps 84:11). In other words, the witnesses of salvation are aware of the need for constant *metanoia*. They are brave followers of Jesus who "went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil" (Acts 10:38).

In the light of the above statements, it is easy to see that the phenomenological category of encounter can be applied in theological soteriology. It will be helpful in exploring the community dimension of salvation, in contrast to the extremely individualistic and spiritualistic misconceptions. But what is the encounter itself? A real encounter, according to Józef Tischner, does not mean a simple perception of the world, people, objects, events, or phenomena, but consists in seeing another person in the context of the tragedy that permeates all ways of being. The aforementioned tragic situation means a situation in which the well-being of a person may be in some way endangered.[34] The encounter is not based on the mere fact of being in an anonymous crowd, nor is it constituted in the wide spaces of shopping centers where the principle of "polite indifference" applies. In a deeper sense, encounter means establishing a dialogical relationship between people capable of taking responsibility for one another. Responsibility is understood here as a response to being addressed by another, who, within the framework of a direct "me-and-you"

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32   Kołakowski, *Chrześcijaństwo*, 35; Kołakowski, *Jezus ośmieszony*, 26.
33   Tarnowski, *Człowiek i transcendencja*, 66.
34   Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, 512.

relationship, becomes a call for us and a categorical obligation at the same time.[35] Responsibility requires commitment and mutual trust in one another in complete freedom. Tarnowski claims that, in the space of a real encounter, man experiences the light of good, which enables him to perceive the hierarchy of values. Experienced good, together with beauty and love, not only enlightens human existence, but also draws man to itself and, to some extent, "seizes" him for itself.[36]

True interpersonal encounters can, under certain conditions, even acquire the status of "sacramental," that is, they may become signs that indicate and make present the authentic bond of love which, in the light of Christian faith, has its source in God. It is worth remembering that the risen Christ, as emphasized by Edward Schillebeeckx, is the basic and paradigmatic sacrament of encounter with God.[37] As the sole mediator of salvation from God, Christ remains forever both a personal model and a condition for the effectiveness of all human encounters, in which the liberating power of God's salvation is revealed and results in the transformation of man affected by the various effects of alienation.

The phenomenon called by Karol Tarnowski "the radiation of goodness" is clearly visible in authentic encounters based on dialogue and mutual responsibility.[38] It is connected with the very nature of good, which aims to communicate itself to other people as widely as possible and, in a secondary way, to extend onto non-personal beings. The good flowing from the righteous or saints takes on the value of a testimony. It is a subtle confirmation of the power of Christ's resurrection, which positively transforms numerous complicated ways of human being. Encounters with the witnesses of salvation, due to the truth about the real work of the Divine Savior, are shocking events in their essence, not so much in an emotional, but rather in ontological and axiological sense. They throw people out of a state of existential stagnation, question their previous habits and expose morally questionable compromises. They release and actualize various possibilities, desires and longings often hidden in the depths of human existence. They are an appeal to human freedom. Authentic encounters do not exert any pressure to act, but rather inspire people to seek a transcendent source of salvation. They consolidate responsibility blurred by the existential anxiety over the possibility of death and over the nothingness of the world in its totality. They invoke basic aspects of responsibility indicated by Roman Ingarden, which include: bearing and taking on responsibility, as well as accountability and responsible action.[39]

Therefore, it is not difficult to see that real, deep, interpersonal encounters are creative. They serve to build a community of people (*communio personarum*) ready

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[35] Filek, *Filozofia odpowiedzialności XX wieku*, 11.
[36] Tarnowski, *Człowiek i transcendencja*, 59.
[37] See: Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament*.
[38] Tarnowski, *Człowiek i transcendencja*, 61.
[39] Ingarden, *Książeczka o człowieku*, 73–74.

to engage in the work of multiplying good in the world. In this way, they promote the belief that salvation, understood as an experience of liberating good, is already to some extent possible within temporality. Authentic encounters become a source of possible transformations in the pessimistic culture of skepticism because, as Karol Tarnowski claims, "in the rays of good, our entire existence changes and becomes an announcement of true being."[40]

Two important questions arise from the mood of anxiety about annihilation and fear of the future: Who can save man? Under what conditions can man meet the Savior? First question implies the belief that there is someone ready to make the highest sacrifice to save human life (physical, spiritual, moral, and social); in other words, to give one's body and blood "for the life of the world" (John 6:51). The second question, on the other hand, assumes the possibility of meeting the Savior in the conditions of an alienated human existence, and establishing a lasting personal relationship with Him, a relationship based on the values of love, trust, cooperation and solidarity.

In response to the above questions, theological soteriology emphasizes that a non-personal reality, for instance, a thing, anonymous energy, soulless structure, idea, or gnosis, cannot be an agent of salvation. It can only be a person: a conscious, rational, selflessly loving subject, capable of a free act of sacrifice and giving one's own life to save man. Salvation does not have a material (reistic) dimension, but rather a personal (personalistic) one. It takes place *in sensu stricto* in the personal sphere, taking the form of a historical drama in which God's, angelic and human persons play their roles. As Czesław Bartnik emphasizes, "the Father is the end of salvation, the Son of God is the historical realization, and the Holy Spirit is the inner dimension."[41] From a personalistic perspective, salvation is associated with the dynamic process of personal optimization, i.e. with the creation of human beings by God (*creatio personarum continua*). It takes place in three stages: the creation of the person in nature (*creatio*), the salvation of the person in history (*salus*) and the fulfillment of the person in the Holy Trinity (*finalizatio*).[42] The expectation of a total salvation from non-personal realities, such as knowledge, technology, culture, politics, economy, or artificial intelligence, would be associated with an idolatrous attempt to deify the matter, and with a derogatory submission to idols of a lower ontic status than man.

Bartnik notes that in some ancient cultures and religions, e.g. Sumerian, Egyptian, or Chinese, salvation was expected from exceptional individuals: heroes, kings, chiefs, or mythical demigods, who were to perform great acts providing rescue, prosperity or blessing. Judaism, on the other hand, links salvation with the liberating

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40   Tarnowski, *Człowiek i transcendencja*, 68.
41   Bartnik, "Medytacja," 185.
42   Bartnik, "Medytacja," 185–186.

and providential act of the one God (Yahweh), who, under the concluded covenant, remains with his chosen people throughout history in a relationship based on trust, faithfulness and love (shepherd-and-sheep, father-and-children, bridegroom-and-bride).[43] Faith in the saving presence of God in the history of Israel was expressed in the confession: "Yahweh is my strength and my song, he has been my savior" (Ps 118:14). In Christian terms, the only agent and mediator of salvation is Jesus Christ (Heb 5:9; 1 Tim 2:5), the incarnate Son of God, who redeemed all people through his death on the cross and resurrection, because "of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Salvation through the Messiah (God-man) does not only mean social liberation, temporal development, material prosperity, cultural flourishing, moral improvement, technological advancement, or elimination of war, hunger and disease. It also involves, as emphasized by Schillebeeckx, an inexpressible "transcendent surplus" reserved exclusively for God (*God's eschatological proviso*), impossible for people to produce with their own finite causative powers.[44] God's eschatological clause makes the ultimate and complete salvation a reality which is unimaginable, inexpressible and unattainable for people by means of mere political actions and charitable works. In theology, then, an apophatic discourse on salvation is also needed. It protects salvation against trivialization and horizontalization, as well as counteracts the fanaticism of self-appointed political and religious messiahs, ready to implement their Utopian salvation projects by force. The discourse allows us to understand that salvation is essentially connected with God Himself, with a life in the state of friendship and the most perfect unity with the Holy Trinity, with blissful participation in the nature of God, with the development of human personality to the fullness foreseen by the Creator, and with the building of the eternal communion of human persons in God.

Although salvation is closely related to the person, the teaching and the work of Christ, it is not limited to the supernatural, spiritual, and eschatological dimensions. As Tillich and Schillebeeckx rightly observe, it is a reality which is dynamic, developmental and polarized: individual and social, historical and eschatological, mystical and praxeological, fragmentary and total, anthropological and cosmic.[45] Primarily, salvation includes man in the individual and social dimensions; and secondarily, it involves all organic and inorganic reality. Since the resurrected Lord-Messiah is still the Head of the creation, all reality, says Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, is somehow mysteriously drawn to Him because the exalted Christ is the Omega Point of the universal evolution of the universe.[46] While appreciating the cosmic dimension of

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43 Bartnik, "Medytacja," 177.
44 Schillebeeckx, *Christ. The Christian Experience*, 778.
45 Nadbrzeżny, *Filozofia zbawienia*, 261–278.
46 Delio, *Christ in Evolution*, 70–71.

salvation, one should not forget about its historical aspect, because Christ, the Savior of the world, is also, as Wolfhart Pannenberg emphasizes, the absolute sense of history in which man realizes himself in time and space.[47]

In the perspective of the history of salvation, Christ appears as an active Savior who had already come into the world (kenotic incarnation), still comes (sacramental presence) and will come again (eschatological Parousia). Thanks to the constant coming of the Risen Lord, in a way, from the future to the present, the saving process of universal recapitulation can develop, that is, the unification of everyone and everything in Christ as the Head of the Cosmos. He is the universal Savior both on the level of human history and on the creative plane of the entire universe. In the event of the Incarnation and Redemption, as taught by John Paul II, the Son of God assumed human nature and united himself, in some mysterious, but also real way, with every human being in the history of the world, and then with the entire created cosmos that is a natural environment for people.[48] People who establish a relationship with the Savior in the micro-history of their lives do not so much change in their material, mental, social or spiritual situation, but change in the personal aspect. They become new creatures in Christ: the adoptive children of God. They receive priestly, prophetic and royal dignity, and become heralds of God in the world: personal signs of His merciful love present in the world. They become heralds of the Good News, and through professional work and parenthood also God's collaborators in the act of continuous creation and sanctification of the world (*creatio continua et sanctificatio mundi*).[49]

Man's encounters with Christ who brings salvation never take place *in abstracto*, but in a particular world full of conflicts, contradictions and contrasts. It is a world in which axiological egalitarianism favors the popularization of Nietzsche's view that evil is God's superstition.[50] In the context of human anxiety about physical, social and spiritual death, the encounter with the Savior – both in the community of the Church (in the Word of God and in the sacraments) and in an anonymous way beyond the visible boundaries – is presented as a gift and a task coming from God. By being a gift, it frees a person from the illusion of self-salvation. Being a task, it inspires trustful cooperation with the Divine grace in building a civilization of solidarity, forgiveness and fraternity,[51] in accordance with St. Paul's statement that "there is nothing I cannot master with the help of the One who gives me strength" (Phil 4:13).

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[47] See: Góźdź, *Jesus Christus*.
[48] John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 13.
[49] Bartnik, "Medytacja," 178.
[50] Quoted after Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, 509.
[51] Francis, *Fratelli tutti*, no. 249.

Conclusion

Introduced into soteriological considerations, the concept of anxiety allows us to fully present man as an alienated, dramatic existence, concerned about his own being and aware of various dangers threatening his integrity. Contrary to common understanding, anxiety as an existential mood is not equated with fear, which is a reaction to specific threats that can be identified and at least partially eliminated. Anxiety refers to the totality of the world perceived through the prism of inevitable death. The epiphany function of anxiety is expressed in showing both the contingency, temporality and transience of man (Heidegger), and the powerful possibilities associated with his freedom (Kierkegaard).

Depending on the interpretation, anxiety can lead either to a person adopting an authentic way of being by accepting the inevitability of death, or to man opening himself to the possibility of transcendent salvation. In the latter case, anxious human existence experiences a "breath of hope" which has its deepest source in the inspiring breath of the Paraclete. In the "space of hope" thus created, the fire of the Holy Spirit stands against the flame of despair that threatens the alienated man. Human freedom, on the other hand, marks the battlefield on which the possibility of salvation fights the possibility of damnation, both temporal and eternal. If, at the moment of existential tragedy, the courage to go beyond himself is victorious in man, then the *kairos* of the encounter with Christ the Savior, who is our "advocate with the Father" and "the sacrifice that takes our sins away, and not only ours, but the whole world's" (1 John 2:1–2), is already approaching.

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Verbum
Vitae

The Double Use of the Locution ועתה
as a Rhetorical Device in the Discourses
of the Old Testament

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To Professor Jean-Louis Ska, SJ
with gratitude

Abstract: In biblical texts, repetition is very often seen by scholars as an indication of an addition or of different sources. In the Old Testament we find a group of speeches characterized by the double or triple use of the adverbial phrase ועתה within the same speech. The phenomenon of double ועתה appears in seventeen texts: Gen 44:18–34; 45:4b-13; Exod 3:7–10; Josh 22:2–5; Ruth 3:10–13; 1 Sam 24:18–22; 26:18–20; 2 Sam 2:5–7; 19:10–11; 1 Kgs 5:17–20 (cf. 2 Chr 2:2–9); 8:23–53 (cf. 2 Chr 6:14–42); 18:9–14; 1 Chr 29:10–19; 2 Chr 2:11–15; 28:9–11; Ezra 10:2–4; Dan 9:4–19. In four cases it has to do with a triple use of ועתה, namely in Josh 14:6–12; 1 Sam 25:24–31; 2 Sam 7:18–29 (cf. 1 Chr 17:16–27) and Ezra 9:6–15. This study analyses these texts and tries to answer the questions raised by the repetition of the particle ועתה: Why use the same locution twice? What are the common characteristics of these discourses? And what is the origin of this phenomenon? The first part of the research is dedicated to the presentation of the general characteristics of ועתה, while the second part concerns the persuasive character of these discourses. The third part consists in the analysis of the function of the double ועתה in the structure of the discourses, as compared with classical rhetoric. The fourth part identifies the context of the speeches with the double/triple ועתה. Finally, the fifth part is dedicated (1) to the importance of the argumentation introduced by the first ועתה in a specific discourse, as it is related to a request for forgiveness (*deprecatio*), and (2) to the origins of the use of the double ועתה as a rhetorical device.

Keywords: *we'attâ*, double ועתה, Hebrew rhetoric, persuasive speech, argumentation, request discourse, discourse structure, *dispositio*, *deprecatio*

Every literary work of art (whether prose or verse) is characterized by content (*res*) and form (*verba*).[1] In the Old Testament we find a group of discourses which, despite the diversity of content, have a very similar form. Among the more than two hundred occurrences of ועתה in the Old Testament, there are some in which this adverbial phrase occurs twice within the same discourse. This phenomenon concerns seventeen texts: Gen 44:18–34; 45:4b-13; Exod 3:7–10; Josh 22:2–5; Ruth 3:10–13; 1 Sam 24:18–22; 1 Sam 26:18–20; 2 Sam 2:5–7; 19:10–11; 1 Kgs 5:17–20 (cf. 2 Chr 2:2–9); 8:23–53 (cf. 2 Chr 6:14–42); 18:9–14; 1 Chr 29:10–19; 2 Chr 2:11–15; 28:9–11; Ezra 10:2–4; Dan 9:4–19. Furthermore, there are four other texts in which

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1   Cf. Lausberg, *Handbook*, 26.

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the particle ועתה is used three times: Josh 14:6–12; 1 Sam 25:24–31; 2 Sam 7:18–29 (cf. 1 Chr 17:16–27) and Ezra 9:6–15.

The use of this phrase in the Old Testament has not been studied very much, and research is especially lacking concerning the rhetorical double use of ועתה.[2] Furthermore, the double ועתה has often been considered to be a clue to an addition or to different sources, while following the path of literary criticism has not been encouraged. At the same time, this phenomenon raises some questions: are we dealing with discourses that have double conclusions? Why use the same locution twice, thereby dividing the speech into several parts? The fact that the use of the double ועתה appears in a limited number of texts also raises the question of the common characteristics of these discourses and their environment of origin.

This study is therefore dedicated to the rhetorical analysis of speeches with a double ועתה and consists of five distinct complementary parts: the first part of the research, which is of a preliminary nature, presents the general characteristics of this adverbial term; the second part concerns the persuasive character of these speeches; the third part consists in the analysis of the function of the double ועתה in the structure of the analysed discourses, in comparison with classical rhetoric; the fourth part identifies the context of the speeches having the double ועתה; and finally, the fifth part is dedicated to the importance of the argumentation introduced by the first ועתה in a specific kind of discourse, that of the request for forgiveness (*deprecatio*), and to the origins of the rhetorical strategy consisting of the use of the double ועתה.

1. The Characteristics of the Adverbial Phrase ועתה in the Texts of the Old Testament

Before moving on to the study of the double use of ועתה in Old Testament discourses, it is useful to consider some general characteristics and functions of this particle in biblical texts. The adverb עתה is commonly translated as *now, nevertheless, in the future, henceforth*,[3] but in different contexts it takes on various nuances of meaning,[4] even within discourses marked by the double use of ועתה, as for example in Exod 3:9–10:

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2 Cf. Brongers, "Bemerkungen," 290; Laurentin, "We'attāh-kai nun," 168–197; Jenni, "Zur Verwendungen," 5–12. In studying the texts in which speeches occur with the double use of ועתה, several researchers simply note the double occurrence of this adverbial phrase. Only a few try to describe the phenomenon in some way, e.g., Greenberg ("Understanding," 73–78). The author, in studying the discourse of God in Exod 3:7–10, highlights the two verses (9 and 10) that begin with ועתה and compares the conclusive structure that they create with the conclusive structure of David's prayer in 2 Sam 7:28–29 where we find the same double use of ועתה. See also Fischer, *Jahwe*, 122–134.

3 Cf. Kronholm, "עת," 14.

4 Cf. Brongers, "Bemerkungen," 290.

"And now, behold (ועתה), the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, now therefore (ועתה), I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." One might say that in this passage the adverb has two somewhat different meanings. On the one hand, it is a temporal adverb (*now*, etc.) and, on the other, it introduces a logical nuance: *now therefore, therefore, for which*.

It is noteworthy that the phrase ועתה, although occurring frequently in the narrative texts[5] of the Old Testament, is never found in indirect discourse in the narrative sections, but always in direct discourse. We encounter it therefore in dialogues, speeches, oracles and prayers. It should also be noted that ועתה is never placed at the absolute beginning of the discourse, but always signals the moment of transition between some of its parts, thus bringing the discourse to its conclusion,[6] which is presented as its logical consequence.

In some cases, when the speech moves away from the primary discursive situation, the phrase ועתה is used to bring it back to its origin,[7] as for example in 2 Sam 7:18–29[8]: David uses the adverbial particle ועתה twice in his prayer, in vv. 25 and 28. After the first התעו, in v. 25, he brings the discourse back to its central topic, which is the "promise of God" (דבר) of which he had spoken at the beginning of his speech (vv. 19 and 21), but from which he had departed when he referred to the election of Israel and their relationship with God. To bring his discourse back to the central theme, David repeats the argumentation, with recurring uses of the root דבר: "And now, O LORD God, confirm forever the word (דבר) that you have spoken (דבר) concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken (רבד)" (2 Sam 7:25).

Often ועתה is used to introduce a reaction to what was stated before and, in this case, it can have a consecutive meaning: "therefore, now, then, therefore," as for example in Gen 3:22: "Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. And now (ועתה), lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live for ever.'" It can also have an opposing meaning, such as *nevertheless, yet, but*, for example in Isa 64:6–7: "for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities. But now (ועתה), O Lord, thou art our father."[9]

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[5] Out of 272 occurrences in the Old Testament: 46 times in 1 Sam; 40 times in Gen; 30 times in 2 Sam; 39 times in 2 Chr; 23 times in 1 Kings; while the recurrences in prophetic and poetic books are more sporadic: 29 times in Isa; 13 times in Ps.

[6] BDB, 774. The specific function of ועתה is seen by the authors in introducing the conclusion of a speech: "drawing a conclusion, especially a practical one, from what has been stated: Gen 3:22 *and now* (since man has once been disobedient), lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever."

[7] Cf. Kronholm, "עת," 14.

[8] Cf. Łach, *Księgi Samuela*, 377–378; Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 102–108.

[9] Cf. Kronholm, "עת," 14; Jenni, "Zur Verwendungen," 10–12.

Bill T. Arnold[10] notes that the ועתה particle usually indicates a change in the flow of speech without, however, leading to a pause in the theme. Usually this change is also accompanied by a time shift, when the person speaking reflects on his past, but then turns his attention to the present or to the future, for example in 2 Kgs 12:7: "Therefore, King Jehoash summoned Jehoiada the priest and the other priests and said to them, 'Why are you not repairing the house? Now therefore (ועתה) take no more money from your donors, but hand it over for the repair of the house.'"[11] If the speech concerns the past or the future, the particle recalls it to an immediate moment in time, *now,* to the present time of the speaker or to his current situation, as for example in Josh 1:2: "Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore (ועתה) arise, go over this Jordan."[12] In this case the particle ועתה can refer to present circumstances,[13] when it introduces an event that has happened, as for example in Mic 4:11: "Now (ועתה) many nations are assembled against you," or when it introduces an order given by a speaker in the present, as in 2 Sam 3:17–18: "And Abner conferred with the elders of Israel, saying, 'For some time past you have been seeking David as king over you. Now (ועתה) then bring it about.'" In some cases, ועתה appears together with הנה which doubles the affirmation of the present, for example in Exod 3:9: "And now (ועתה), behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me."

Similarly, the particle ועתה can introduce a turning point in the discourse, when it indicates the change of a situation with respect to the past, for example in Gen 32:11: "for with my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now (ועתה) I have become two camps." Another nuance of ועתה concerns situations in which a change that is introduced will extend into the future, for example in Gen 11:6: "They have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And now (ועתה) nothing that they propose to do will be impossible for them." As mentioned above, this adverbial phrase can also function as a causal conjunction, as for example in Exod 4:11–12: "Then the LORD said to him, 'Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now therefore (ועתה) go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.'"

In summary, the adverbial expression ועתה can have different meanings depending on the context in which it is used. When it appears in direct speech, it reveals its transitive and conclusive character, signalling a transition from one part of the discourse to another and bringing it to an end. Because of its temporal value, it can shift the story from a past moment towards the present situation of the speaker. The particle ועתה is therefore an effective and versatile rhetorical tool.[14]

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10   Cf. Arnold – Choi, *A Guide*, 140.
11   See also other examples reported by the author: Gen 3:22; Exod 32:30.
12   Cf. Jenni, "Zur Verwendungen," 7–8.
13   Cf. Brongers, "Bemerkungen," 291–299.
14   Cf. Laurentin, "Weʿattāh-kai nun," 171; Brongers, "Bemerkungen," 290–291.

2. The Persuasive Character of Speeches with the Double ועתה

The goal of every speaker is to induce others to adopt his point of view, but each culture develops its own rhetorical tools, namely, techniques of persuasion, figures of style and thought processes suited for this purpose. In fact, one of the definitions of rhetoric is the *art of persuading*,[15] that is, a method of presenting each subject in a convincing manner.[16] In fact, in every speech with the double ועתה we can see that the speaker chooses the most persuasive ideas, those which will legitimize his request and orient the listener in a positive direction, so that his request is accepted. At this point we might ask why the speaker is looking for the most effective, persuasive strategies. What is his difficulty in submitting his request? Is he in a lower position, so that there is a distance between him and his interlocutor, or does the difficulty come from the nature of the request or from the circumstances in which he finds himself?

Furthermore, the person to be convinced is not only the hearer of the discourse, but also the reader, to whom the whole story is "really" addressed.[17] The question therefore becomes: "What is the effect of these discourses on the reader?" What is the message for the reader? To answer these questions, it is worth looking at all the texts studied:

1) In Gen 44:18–34, Judah uses two strong juridical arguments to persuade Pharaoh's vizier to have Benjamin return home with his brothers and to leave him, Judah, as a slave in place of his younger brother (vv. 33–34). His father will die if he does not see Benjamin return; he had sworn to his father that he would be the guarantor[18] of Benjamin's return (vv. 30–32); and he doesn't want to see his father's pain at the loss of a son a second time. Let us remember, however, that only Joseph and the reader "know" that the Egyptian vizier is really Joseph. Judah, the Hebrew shepherd, is not aware of this and therefore addresses the Egyptian vizier in a courtly language, well aware of the distance that separates him from his interlocutor. Furthermore, Judah is one of the brothers accused of the theft. In this discourse, Joseph first learns what happened when the brothers returned home after selling him and how his father reacted. What then is the message of this story for the reader? What values does the author want to emphasize for the reader by means of Judah's speech? Judah defends the value of brotherhood, which the reader should recognize as essential. The speech of Judah is in fact a heartfelt plea in favoured of brotherhood, centred on respect for the father figure.[19]

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15 Cf. Aletti *et al.*, *Lessico*, 85.
16 Cf. Lausberg, *Handbook*, §33.
17 Cf. Ska, "Sincronia," 163.
18 Cf. Lipiński, "ערב," 1006–1012.
19 Cf. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 426–427; Ska, "Judah," 27–39; Pawłowski, "Od więzów krwi," 35–70; Bonora, *Giuseppe*, 48–49; Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 291–297.

2) Also in Joseph's discourse, in Gen 45:1–13, the narrator wants to confirm in the eyes of the reader the value of brotherhood and family solidarity, already expressed by Judah. In fact, Joseph uses a theological argument to persuade his brothers to bring his father Jacob and his family to Egypt: namely, that according to his interpretation, it was not his brothers who had sold him into Egypt, but rather that it was God himself who had sent him before them in order to save the lives of the whole family. The difficulty that Joseph encounters in putting this request to his brothers derives both from the fact that the brothers are surprised by the true identity of the Egyptian vizier, and from the "crime" that weighs on their relationship.

3) In Exod 3:7–10, God makes known to Moses the sufferings of his people in Egypt in entrusting him with his mission: "Come now therefore (ועתה), I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt" (v. 10). God wants to convince Moses to accept the mission, but ultimately it is the narrator who wants to convince the reader that Moses' mission derives not from his own initiative, but actually comes from God, who, in order to convince Moses, emphasizes the cries for help of the oppressed Israelites, to which he cannot remain indifferent without serious consequences. Furthermore, God asks Moses to carry out a particularly important and delicate mission (cf. Exod 5–14). God will address this difficulty with a persuasive argument.

4) In Caleb's discourse in Josh 14:6–12, the narrator wants to convince the reader of the legitimacy of the presence of Caleb's descendants in the kingdom of Judah. For this reason, Caleb, in order to obtain from Joshua the land that belongs to him, presents as an argument the irrevocable promise of God himself.

5) Likewise, in Josh 22:2–5, Joshua tries to have some tribes return home by pointing out that the Lord himself has given them peace.

6) In Ruth 3:10–13, Boaz wants to convince Ruth to lie down at his feet at night, meaning that she will be under the cloak of his protection, and thereby reassures her that the next day he will intervene as the "redeemer" in her cause. The author, in fact, intends to persuade the reader that Ruth, a Moabite, is a worthy wife for an Israelite.

7) In 1 Sam 24:18–22, Saul wants to convince David to swear that he will spare his descendants, and he supports this request by affirming that David will surely become king. The enmity that has created distance between the interlocutors makes it difficult for Saul to ask David for clemency for his family. In the story of David's accession to the throne, this episode has a particular value, because Saul himself confirms the validity of the "candidate" David. Who, if not Saul, would have thought of legitimizing David? Ultimately, the narrator tries to convince the reader of David's legitimacy as king of Israel.

8) In 1 Sam 25:24–31, Abigail tries to persuade David to abandon his plan of revenge against Nabal. Her discourse of mediation is made more persuasive by

the gifts she has brought to David and by her prostration before him. The distant relationship makes it difficult for Abigail to ask for forgiveness; that is why she tries to plead for it with her gestures as well.

9) In 1 Sam 26:18–20, David wants to persuade Saul to stop pursuing him; otherwise, he warns him, he will risk dying in a foreign land and serving other gods. Saul would have condemned him to die in a foreign land.

10) 2 Sam 2:5–7 contains the message of David to the men of Jabesh-gilead in which, while praising their charity towards Saul by giving him a proper burial, he presents himself as Saul's legitimate heir. We can also deduce that Saul's "tomb" has an important role in the culture of the time: the reader, together with the "guardians of the tomb," is called to recognize David as the legitimate heir, while Abner chooses a son of Saul.

11) In 2 Sam 7:18–29 David wants to obtain divine protection for his dynasty; for this reason, he praises God for his promise ("I will build you a house") and emphasizes God's faithfulness. David's prayer to God is extremely important, but actually the narrator wants to show to what extent the request is fundamental for the reader.[20]

12) In 2 Sam 19:10–15 the people discuss the political crisis after the death of Absalom and, remembering the merits of King David, convince themselves to return David to the throne.

13) In 1 Kgs 5:17–20, Solomon, in his message to the king of Tyre, uses a convincing political-religious argument (God has given him peace and his promise) to support his request for cedars from Lebanon for the construction of the temple. Furthermore, in making the request, Solomon uses formal language in order to appear courteous.

14) In 1 Kgs 8:23–53, Solomon, emphasizing the fidelity of God, wants to obtain a blessing for the temple he has built. The request is important not only for him, but for all the people of Israel and the narrator is looking for persuasive strategies to convince the reader.

15) In 1 Kgs 18:9–14, Obadiah tries to persuade Elijah not to send him to the king, insisting that Ahab will kill him.

16) In 1 Chr 29:10–19 David, praising God and recognizing his power and greatness, seeks to obtain divine protection for the people and for his heir, Solomon. Also in this case, the difficulty in making the request comes from the distance between the two interlocutors, that is, between God and man, and in the importance of the request itself, which concerns not only David, but also his heir, Solomon, and all the people of Israel.

17) In 2 Chr 2:11–15 the king of Tyre, in replying to Solomon, praises the God of Israel and the intelligence of the king, thus supporting his request to be sent

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20 Cf. Eslinger, *House of God*, 20.

the promised goods. In addition, he supports his very courteous words with a concrete gesture, namely the sending of an expert craftsman.

18) In 2 Chr 28:9–11 the prophet Oded, wanting to obtain the release of prisoners, denounces the guilt of the army soldiers of Israel, who had taken prisoners and booty from their brothers in Judah and Jerusalem, and he threatens them with the unleashing of God's wrath.

19) In Ezra 9:7–15, Ezra, confessing before God the contamination of the people with other peoples, and recalling the punishment and destruction they have suffered, wants to obtain God's benevolence towards the small part of Israel that remains Ultimately, Ezra's discourse is aimed at convincing the reader of the importance of the Law, in particular of the prohibition of mixed marriages. It is also about convincing the readers both of their faults and of the merits of Ezra. In fact, Ezra's prayer addressed to God is intended to show how important this request is for the people of Israel.

20) In Ezra 10:2–4, Shecaniah wants to persuade Ezra to make a radical choice, that is, to get rid of all foreign wives and their children. The radical nature of this choice is difficult for the narrator to present. He therefore looks for persuasive strategies to convince his readers to give up mixed marriages.

21) In Dan 9:4–19, Daniel tries to convince God to accept his plea in which he asks for the reconciliation of the people with God.

In most of such cases, the discourse reveals a certain urgency, coming from the particular difficulty or threat in which the speaker finds himself. For example, in Gen 44:18–34 the life of an elderly father, namely Jacob, is at stake. In Gen 45:4–13, Joseph's request is urgent, in order to save the life of the family from starvation. In Exod 3:7–10, God's intervention is urgently awaited to free Israel. In Ruth 3:10–13 there is an urgent need for a *go'ēl* to save a family from dying out. In 1 Sam 24:18–23, Saul anxiously seeks protection for his descendants. In 1 Sam 25:24–31, Abigail urgently asks David's forgiveness in order to avoid bloodshed. In 1 Sam 26:18–20, David, pursued by Saul, tries to get out immediately from the danger of idolatry and, above all, he tries to save his own skin (cf. v. 20). In 1 Kgs 18:9–14, Obadiah's life is in danger. In Ezra 10:2–4, the salvation of the men who have taken foreign wives and the success of Ezra's reform are at stake.

In other cases, perhaps less urgent, the object of the request is nevertheless of extreme importance, as in 1 Kgs 5:17–20 and 2 Chr 2:11–15, where the purpose is the building of the temple. In 2 Sam 19:10–15, the text speaks of the crisis affecting the monarchy in Judah. In some cases, the prayer becomes more solemn, as in the following prayers: in 2 Sam 7:18–29, the intercession concerns the fate of the dynasty of David; in 1 Kgs 8:23–53, the reason for prayer is the flourishing of the temple; in 1 Chr 29:10–19, the intercession deals with the future of the kingdom of David; in Ezra 9:7–15 there is concern for the fate of the people of Israel; in Dan 9:4–19 the prophet wants to obtain reconciliation of the guilty people with God. Even in discourses

where there is negotiation without particular urgency, the speaker never addresses the request without a preamble to his interlocutor, but always precedes it with some justification: in Josh 14:6–12 Caleb wants to get the land that belongs to him; in chapter 22:2–5, Joshua exhorts the tribes to be faithful to God and his commandments; in 2 Sam 2:5–7 there is an exhortation addressed to the men of Jabesh-gilead.

Examination of the passages leaves no doubt that the goal of discourses with the double ועתה is always to convince the interlocutor to accept the request for forgiveness, permission or protection, regardless of the subject, its extent or the urgency of the situation. We can therefore conclude that within the narrative, the speeches with the double ועתה have a persuasive character with regard both to the interlocutor of the discourse and to the reader. In addition to the discourse, the speaker too is very important. His authority adds persuasive force to the speech, as in Saul's speech to David, the future king (1 Sam 24:18–22). According to Aristotle, there are three elements in persuasive discourses that contribute to their success: "The first depends on the personal character of the speaker, the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind, the third on the proof or apparent proof provided by the words of the speech itself."[21] As we have observed in the above passages, all three persuasive components are very important.

In our research, however, rather than analysing all the persuasive elements in the selected discourses, we shall focus only on the function of the double use of ועתה as a persuasive element in the structural organization of the discourses. For this purpose, we shall compare these selections with the structure of persuasive discourses in classical rhetoric, in which the organization of the speech (*dispositio*) is one of the tools giving convincing force to prayer. Since the elements that make up the persuasive speech are not equivalent, their organization becomes a key factor in our analysis. In the case of the texts analysed here, the creative use of the word is very important. From this fact emerges a fundamental question: "What is the rhetorical function of ועתה in these passages, and why did the authors use the double or triple ועתה rather than a simpler and more economical construction with a single conclusive ועתה?" We shall try to answer these questions later.

3. The Function of the Double use of the Particle ועתה in the Structure of the Discourses

The speeches with double ועתה, regardless of their length, all have the same characteristics, observable at first glance: they are the prose discourses ending with a request introduced by the second ועתה. The request can take different forms: petition,

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21   Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetorica* I, 2, 147.

request, invitation, order, prayer, invocation or supplication. In order better to understand these discourses, discover the convergences between them and describe this phenomenon, we need to analyze the function of the particle וְעַתָּה in the structure of the discourses where it occurs twice.

3.1. The Double וְעַתָּה in the Composition of the Discourse

The fact that the same element is used twice in the rhetorical composition of these discourses suggests a very specific function. Given that the phenomenon is present in all the cases cited, we need to assess whether it is the expression of a convention, that is, of a common rhetorical technique. To answer this question, it seems useful to start with the fundamental question: what are the functions of the first and second וְעַתָּה?

3.1.1. The Function of the First וְעַתָּה

As we have already observed, the locution וְעַתָּה is never used at the very beginning of a discourse. Also, in the speeches under consideration, the first וְעַתָּה signals the transition from the initial part of the speech to the part that seems to be its first conclusion. Any attentive reader, however, realizes that after the first וְעַתָּה the discourse does not end, but continues, and only after the second וְעַתָּה does the prayer come to an end. In fact, after the first וְעַתָּה the discourse usually continues with new argumentations, as in Abigail's discourse in 1 Sam 25:24–31. After the first וְעַתָּה Abigail introduces her reflection, namely that God himself prevented David from shedding blood and executing justice on the house of Nabal with his own hand. The presence of a new argumentation after the first וְעַתָּה is also found in the following discourses: Josh 22:2–5; 1 Sam 24:18–23; 1 Kgs 5:17–20; 2 Chr 2:10–15; 1 Sam 26:18–20; 2 Sam 2:5–7.

In some discourses, after the first וְעַתָּה an element already presented in the preceding narrative is simply resumed. This way of proceeding is found in Exod 3:7–10; Ruth 3:10–13 and in 2 Sam 7:18–29. From analysis of the texts, it is clear that the past facts, presented in the narrative preceding the first וְעַתָּה, do not all have the same importance or are not even the subject of the request, but rather explain its context. Only after the first וְעַתָּה does the speaker present the real argumentation, that is, the main reason for the request.[22]

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22 Among the discourses with the double וְעַתָּה, only in the prayer of Solomon, in 1 Kings 8:23–30, do both the first and the second וְעַתָּה, introduce the request: the first presents a particular request, that is to keep (imperative of שָׁמַר) the promise made to his father David, always to assure him a descendant faithful to God. The second וְעַתָּה, on the other hand, introduces the conclusion with the request for the blessing of the newly built temple and the more general plea, that is to say that his prayer be heard. It should be noted, however, that the multiple repetitions and the lack of a clear linearity in the flow of speech constitute a particular trait of the literary genre which is prayer.

In still other discourses, after the first ועתה, previously mentioned facts are combined with new argumentations, as for example in Josh 14:6–12. In the first conclusion, Caleb summarizes the story of the promise of the land made to him by the Lord (through the oath of Moses), but also adds an entirely new element, namely, that despite his advanced age he is still in good shape and sufficiently fit to take charge of the good management of the land. We find the same way of proceeding in Gen 44:18–34. Thus, in formulating the argumentation, Judah's discourse takes up the most important facts of the narrative before the first ועתה in v. 30, while the discourse following ועתה in v. 33 combines the elements already mentioned with new ones.

Furthermore, the temporal character of the first ועתה shifts the discourse from the narration of past events to the present moment of the speaker or to the present point of the discourse, which may also include a reference to an immediate future. For this reason, when one of the facts already mentioned in the narrative is repeated in the argumentation, it acquires a different weight and a new role in the rhetorical composition of the speech. In fact, while in the narrative it was part of the historical background of an introductory nature, now, after the first ועתה, it acquires the strength of the central argumentation, that is to say it becomes the key element supporting the request that the speaker will express in the conclusion of the speech. An example of this function of ועתה is the discourse in Exod 3:7–10,[23] which begins with the narration of the facts (vv. 7–8):

God's discourse in Exod 3:7–10 is part of his dialogue with Moses that began in verse 4 and goes directly to the heart of a very urgent problem. God tells Moses about the situation in Egypt (with verbs in the *past tense*): "I have surely seen (ראה ראיתי את־עני) the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters (ואת־צעקתם שמעתי); for I know their sorrows" (v. 7). The narrative focuses on the sufferings of the Israelites in Egypt, on God as their eyewitness and on his decision to free them and take them from the land of Egypt to a land flowing with milk and honey (vv. 7–8).

Argumentation – after the first ועתה (v. 9)

The argumentation is introduced by ועתה together with הנה, which reinforces the statement in the present tense. In fact, the discussion no longer focuses on

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[23] Some scholars who support the presence of two sources in the story of Moses' vocation see the duplication in the discourse of God (Exod 3:7–10), that is, the parallelism between vv. 7–8 on the one hand and 9–10 on the other. Cf. Noth, *Esodo*, 49–56; Childs, *Esodo*, 69. Other authors do not accept the hypothesis of the two sources, but still argue that vv. 7–8 and 9–10 are not of the same hand and consider as editorial vv. 9–10 (exactly the same verses that Martin Noth attributed to the source E). Cf. Gertz, *Tradition*, 289–291. Martin Buber (*Mosè*, 34) defends the unity of this story. He is of the opinion that the apparent tensions come from a poor understanding of the text, and in terms of composition and style, he considers these chapters to be of a high level of narrative art. Thomas Römer ("Exodus 3–4," 65–79) instead attributes Exod 3:7–10 to one "Grunderzählung" of Exod 3–4.

the past, but on the present situation of the speaker, that is, God. It should be noted, however, that in v. 9 the author does not exactly repeat all of v. 7, but instead uses another choice of words.[24] Of v. 7 only the two key words that indicate the essential elements of the content are repeated[25]: *cry* (צעקה) and *I have seen* (ראה). The differences between the *narration* of the situation in Egypt in v. 7 and the *argumentation* in v. 9 are represented in the following diagram:

Table 1. Verses 7 and 9 compared

v. 7	v. 9
ראה ראיתי את־עני עמי אשר במצרים *I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt*	וגם־ראיתי את־הלחץ אשר מצרים לחצים אתם *and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them*
ואת־צעקתם שמעתי מפני נגשיו *and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters*	ועתה הנה צעקת בני־ישראל באה אלי *Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me*

Note that v. 9, which begins with ועתה הנה, does not say that God *has heard* (שמע) the cry, but that *it has come to me* (באה אלי). The second essential element is linked to *seeing*: in v. 7 the root ראה is an *infinitive absolute* emphasizing the *perfect* (ראה ראיתי), while v. 9 has the *simple perfect* ראיתי and uses different words: God no longer speaks of *affliction* (עני, v. 7), but of the *oppression* (הלחץ) with which *the Egyptians oppress* (לחצים, participle) *them*. Furthermore, the *cry* and the *affliction* in v. 7 refer to *my people* (עמי) *who are in Egypt*, while in v. 9 *the cry* and *oppression* concern *the children of Israel* (בני־ישראל). The critical situation of the people, which God saw, becomes very urgent and requires an immediate solution, precisely because of the cry for help of the oppressed which [...] *is come unto me*. At this point, God's intervention is not simply decided calmly and on the basis of mere seeing (v. 8), but is based on the fact that *now*, that is, just as God speaks, the cry of the oppressed reaches him and *therefore now* he needs urgently to intervene.

Conclusion – following the second ועתה (v. 10)

The request, which appears in the conclusion after the second ועתה, is the logical consequence of the argumentation and must be accepted immediately (ועתה, *and now come*, v. 10). God sends Moses, ordering him to go to Egypt and liberate his people. In both cases the imperative is used: *go!* (לכה) *and bring forth!* (והוצא). The answer to

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24 The relationship between v. 8 and v. 10, according to some scholars, is marked by an important difference: in v. 8 we find God's decision declared in a generic way, while, in v. 10, God addresses a concrete order to Moses: "Come, now therefore (ועתה), I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." Cf. Blum, *Studien*, 23.

25 Cf. Fischer, *Jahwe*, 127.

the cry for help cannot be postponed, but requires an immediate response, *now*, in the *present*. It is also worth noting in conclusion that the "oppressed" are referred to as both *my people* and *the children of Israel*.

The narrative taken up after the first ועתה, in this case with expressions צעקתם and ראיתי, is not, therefore, a simple repetition; not only does the vocabulary change, but also its rhetorical function: we pass from the historical background of the narration to actual argumentation, from the past to the present, or, in some cases, to the future of the speaker. This temporal passage is also underscored by the change in verb forms, as for example in the first part of Judah's discourse in Gen 44:18–34. Up to v. 29 the verb forms are in the past tense (e.g. שאל [v. 19]; ונאמר [v. 20]; מת ויותר [v. 20]; ונגד [v. 24]; ויהי כי עלינו [v. 24], while in the second part introduced in v. 30 by the first ועתה, the verbs are mostly in the future כבאי [v. 30]; … והיה כ [v. 31]; ומת והורידו [v. 31]).[26]

We can therefore conclude that the first ועתה does not function simply as a conclusion to the preceding narrative. In fact, the first ועתה serves above all to introduce the real reason for the request, signalling the transition from narration to argumentation. With the first ועתה, then, the speaker brings the discourse not to a conclusion, but to its central point, that is, to the argumentation that constitutes the heart of the whole speech. The particle ועתה, because of both its transitive and consecutive character and meaning, also functions in this case as a hinge connecting the two parts of the discourse, signaling the logical passage from the initial part to the argumentation. In some speeches the introductory part is quite developed and in others it is more concise. It is clear that from the point of view of the organization of the discourse, everything that precedes the first ועתה functions as an introduction to the argumentation on which the final request rests.

3.1.2. The Function of the Second ועתה

The common element in the discourses we have analysed is the final request. The particle ועתה reveals in this second use its unmistakable conclusive character, bringing the whole discourse to a close. In the vast majority of cases, the request is formulated explicitly through exhortation using the *imperative*, *cohortative* or even *lōʾ* or *ʾal* plus *yiqtol*.[27] The use of verb forms in the conclusion introduced with the second ועתה is shown in the following table:

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[26] Other examples: in Ruth 3:10–13, in the first part of Boaz's very short speech, in v. 10, he refers to the past of Ruth (לבלתי־לכת), while after the first ועתה, in v. 11, the verbs indicate the future, when Boaz declares that he will do what Ruth asked (אעשׂה־לך); and in 1 Sam 24:18–23, in the first part, vv. 18–20, where Saul refers to the fact that David spared his life (ולא הרגתני; גמלתני), the verb forms refer to the past tense, while in the second part, introduced by the first ועתה, the verbs indicate the future (תמלוך וקמה, v. 21), when Saul predicts that David will become king and his kingdom will be stable.

[27] Cf. Ska, *I nostri padri*, 15.

Table 2. Use of verb forms after the second ועתה

Nº	CONCLUSION	imperative	jussive	cohortative, weqatal, lō' + imperfect
1.	Gen 44:33–34 Speech of Judah to the vizier of Egypt		*remain* ישב־נא *go up* יעל	
2.	Gen 45:8–13 Speech of Joseph to his brothers	*hurry and go up* מהרו ועלו		weqatal following imperative, *say* ואמרתם
3.	Exod 3:10 God's speech to Moses	*come* לכה *bring out* והוצא		cohortative, *I will send you* ואשלחך
4.	Josh 14:12 Caleb's speech to Joshua	*give me* תנה־לי		
5.	Josh 22:4b-5 Speech of Joshua to the tribes of Israel	*come back and go!* פנו ולכו		
6.	Ruth 3:12–13 Boaz's speech to Ruth	*spend the night* ליני *lie down* שכבי		
7.	1 Sam 24:22 Speech of Saul to David	*swear to me* השבעה לי		
8.	1 Sam 25:27–31 Abigail's speech to David	*forgive* שא נא		
9.	1 Sam 26:20 David's speech to Saul		*does not fall* אל־יפל	
10.	2 Sam 2:7 David's speech to the men of Jabesh-gilead	*be strong* והיו	*be reinforced* תחזקנה	
11.	2 Sam 7:29 David's prayer	*deign to bless* הואל וברך		
12.	2 Sam 19:11b Speech of the people	*why do you say nothing?* חרש *participle*		
13.	1 Kgs 5:20 Solomon's message to Hiram	*order* צוה	*cut down* ויכרתו־לי	
14.	1 Kgs 8:26–29 Solomon's Prayer		*came true* יאמן נא	weqatal following jussive: *and regard* ופנית
15.	1 Kgs 18:14 Obadiah's speech to the prophet Elijah	*go and say* לך אמר		

Nº	CONCLUSION	*imperative*	*jussive*	*cohortative, weqatal, lōʾ + imperfect*
16.	1 Chr 29:17b-19 David's prayer	*keep* שׁמרה, *direct* והכן and *give* תן		
17.	2 Chr 2:14–15 Hiram's response to Solomon		*send* ישׁלח	
18.	2 Chr 28:11 Oracle of Oded	*hear me* שׁמעוני *return the captives* והשׁיבו		
19.	Ezra 9:12–15 Ezra's Prayer			lōʾ + imperfect *do not give* אל־תתנו *do not take* אל־תשׂאו *do not seek* ולא־תדרשׁו
20.	Ezra 10:3–4 Speech by Shecaniah	*arise* קום *Be brave and take action* חזק ועשׂה	*let it be done* יעשׂה	cohortative, *let us make a covenant* נכרת־ברית
21.	Dan 9:17–19 Daniel's prayer	imperative, 10 times: 3 times *hear* (שׁמע), *to make light shine* (אחר), *incline* (נטה), *open* (פקח), *see* (ראה), *forgive* (סלח), *listen* (קשׁב) *and act* (עשׂה)	ʿal + jussive, *do not be angry any more* אל־תאחר	

The second ועתה thus signals the transition of the discourse from the argumentation to the final request. This transition is also emphasized by the change in verb forms: while in the argumentation we see mostly verbs in the *indicative*, the request, by contrast, is expressed with the *imperative* or in an equivalent way.[28] Only in 2 Sam 19:10–11 and 1 Kgs 18:9–14 is the final request not expressed explicitly using one of the verb forms indicated above, but rather through rhetorical means:

1) In 2 Sam 19:10–11, the discourse ends with the question, "Now why are you not doing anything to get the king back?" (the *participle* מחרשׁים is used: *do nothing*). In fact, the question is an urgent request to bring the king back;

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28   Other examples: in the discourse of Judah in Gen 44:18–34, after the first ועתה, we note the use of the *indicative* (קשׁורה; והורידו; ומת; ערב; וחטאתי) which changes to the *jussive* (ישׁב־נא and יעל) after the second ועתה, which introduces the request; in Exod 3:7–10 in the discourse of God, in v. 9 introduced by the first ועתה, we find the verbs in the *indicative* (באה; ראיתי), while after the second ועתה we note the use of the *jussive* (לכה; והוצא); similarly in Josh 14:6–12 after the first ועתה the indicative verbs are used (דבר; החיה), while after the second ועתה we find the *imperative* (תנה); in Josh 22:2–5 in Joshua's admonition we find the *perfect* (הניח), while in the concluding request the *imperative* (פנו ולכו).

2) In 1 Kgs 18:9–14, Obadiah tells the prophet Elijah that by ordering him to go and say to Ahab, "Elijah is here," he is putting his (Obadiah's) life in danger, because if he returns to King Ahab, Ahab will kill him. He then concludes the speech by exclaiming: "And now you say to me: 'Go and tell your lord: here is Elijah!' He will kill me!" Obadiah quotes Elijah's order by way of asking for the reverse, namely that Elijah not send him to Ahab.

In summary, we can say that the function of the first ועתה in the discourses we have analysed is linked to its transitional and temporal character, with a consecutive meaning: it signals the transition from the introductory part of the discourse to the argumentation that constitutes the centre of the discourse. The second ועתה, on the other hand, takes the consecutive meaning to its conclusion and brings the whole discussion to an end, by introducing a request that follows logically from the preceding argumentation. In fact, it is the reaction of the speaker to the argumentation that pushes him to address his interlocutor with a specific request.

3.2. The General Structure of Discourses with the Double ועתה

The above analysis of the functions of the first and second ועתה showed that in discourses with the double ועתה we do not have two conclusions; rather, the first introduces the argumentation and the second the conclusion containing the request, namely the end point of the discourse. In fact, in a first reading of the texts we already can see that the speeches with the double ועתה reach their *climax* with the final request, the goal towards which the whole prayer tends.

At this point we shall address the question of the recurring structure of these discourses and the organization of their contents. Some reveal a more complex structure, while others are simpler. In the more well-structured cases, found in Gen 44:18–34; Ruth 3:10–13; 1 Sam 24:18–22; 2 Sam 2:5–7; 1 Kgs 8:23–30; 1 Kgs 18:9–14; and Dan 9:4–19, the general structure of the discourses with the double ועתה is composed of four parts:

A. Brief introduction
B. Narration of past facts
C. Argumentation – after the first ועתה
D. Conclusion – after the second ועתה

The brief introduction sets the tone for the plea, establishes contact with the hearer(s), in the hope of making them attentive and benevolent, or simply and briefly announces the topic.[29] Often the discourse begins with a request to listen, accompa-

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29   Cf. Aletti *et al*, *Lessico*, 93.

nied by good wishes or praise, in a declamatory tone or a simple *captatio benevolentiae*. Then follows the narration of the facts, in which the speaker usually explains the circumstances of his request. As noted above, the narration of past events does not constitute the real argumentation and does not have adequate persuasive force. Very often it strays from the main theme and provides historical background for the request occurring in the present time of the speaker. To make the transition from the past to the present, the speaker uses ועתה followed by the explicit argumentation, in which the request is gradually prepared and introduced with the second and concluding ועתה.

In addition to the presence of the double ועתה, the main element supporting this structure is the change in verb forms. In the introductory part, namely in the narration of the facts (B), the verbs are in the *indicative,* referring to the *past*, while in the argumentation (C) they are generally expressed in the *present* or in the *future*. The verb forms used in these two parts of the speech are: *wayyiqtol, qatal, weqatal, yiqtol*. The conclusion (D), on the other hand, is marked by the use of exhortative verb forms: *imperative, cohortative, jussive*, or *lōʾ* with the *imperfect*.

In other discourses with the double ועתה the structure is less clear. The brief introduction (A) is missing and the author begins with the narration of past events. We can see this way of proceeding in: Exod 3:7–10[30]; Josh 22:1–5; 2 Sam 19:10–11; 1 Kgs 5:17–20; 2 Chr 28:9–11; and Ezra 10:2–4. The common structure of these discourses is tripartite:

A.   -------
B.   Narration of the facts of the past
C.   Argumentation – after the first ועתה
D.   Conclusion – after the second ועתה

In still other discourses, surprisingly, the narration of the facts (B) is lacking: cf. Gen 45:4–16; 1 Sam 26:18–20; 1 Chr 29:10–19; 2 Chr 2:11–15. After a brief introduction, the discourse immediately proceeds to the argumentation and then to the conclusion, without any narration of previous facts. The structure of these discourses is therefore as follows:

A.   Brief introduction
B.   --------------
C.   Argumentation – after the first ועתה
D.   Conclusion – after the second ועתה

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30   It should be noted that in Exod 3:7–10 we are dealing with a divine discourse. In this case, a *captatio benevolentiae* on the part of God seems rather useless or simply superfluous.

In summary, the speaker introduces the discourse by trying to enter into a relationship with his interlocutor (part A). He then presents a situation, circumstances or events that occurred in the past, thus forming a narrative within the narrative (B); however, one of these two elements, i.e., the introduction or the narration of past events, may be missing. The elements of the discourse that are always present are: the argumentation (C) and the conclusion (D), each introduced by ועתה.

3.3. The Structure of Discourses with the Double ועתה and the *dispositio*[31] in Classical Rhetoric

At this point we continue our analysis of the double use of ועתה in Old Testament discourses by comparing their structure to the composition of persuasive discourses in classical rhetoric. According to the principles of classical rhetoric, persuasive discourse is divided into four main parts: *exordium*, *narratio*, *argumentatio* and *peroratio*.[32] Surprisingly, the structure of the biblical discourses with the double ועתה corresponds exactly to the composition (*dispositio*) of the persuasive discourses, as described by the classical authors.

Table 3. Structure of the speeches compared

Structure of the speeches with the double ועתה	Dispositio in persuasive speeches according to classical rhetoric
A. Introduction	*Exordium*
B. Narration of the facts	*Narratio*
C. Argumentation	*Argumentatio*
D. Conclusion	*Peroratio*

In the vast majority of cases with the double ועתה we find all four elements to be present in the structure of the discourses: cf. Gen 44:18–34; Ruth 3:10–13; 1 Sam 24:18–22; 1 Sam 25:24–31; 1 Sam 24:18–23; 2 Sam 2:5–7; 2 Sam 7:18–29; 1 Kgs 8:23–30; 1 Kgs 18:9–14; Ezra 9:6–15; and Dan 9:4–19.

The analysis of the structure of the speeches with the double ועתה has already been presented in detail (point 3.2.). For this reason we will now analyse the *dispositio* in a discourse with the double ועתה to the first example that appears in the Bible, namely the discourse in Gen 44:18–34:

1) *Exordium*: in v. 18, Judah begins his speech by asking Pharaoh's vizier for permission to speak, thus recognizing his dignity: you and Pharaoh are one. Judah uses

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31 Cf. Aristotle, *Rhetorica* III, 13, 10.
32 Cf. Garavelli Mortara, *Manuale*, 60–61.

the *captatio benevolentiae*, trying to establish contact with his interlocutor so that he will become attentive and benevolent, exactly as the exordium or first part is foreseen in classical rhetoric.[33]

2) *Narratio*: in vv. 19–29, Judah exposes the facts of the past: he recalls the first meeting with the Egyptian vizier and recounts the reaction of his father Jacob when he asks permission to take Benjamin to Egypt, emphasizing the close relationship between father and son. This section corresponds exactly to the *narratio*, which informs the listener of the subject of the dispute.[34]

3) *Argumentatio*: in vv. 30–32, introduced by the first ועתה, Judah builds his argument by referring a second time to his conversation with Jacob: "Your servants will have brought down our father's grey hairs in sorrow to the grave" (Gen 42:38; 44:29). With this argument based on pathos, Judah tries to evoke emotion and feeling in the Egyptian vizier.[35] The second argument is the crucial element of Judah's personal involvement (*ethos*), appearing for the first time in the discourse, namely that he has vouched for his brother's return to his father. Again, Judah uses a quote, this time citing his oath to his father: "If I do not bring him back to you, you can blame me for it all my life." This part of Judah's speech corresponds to the argumentation in persuasive speech according to the principles of classical rhetoric. In fact, Judah, in presenting the two arguments, is hoping to find a solution, which he will propose to the Egyptian vizier in the request that follows.

4) *Peroratio*: vv. 33–34, introduced by the second ועתה, conclude Judah's discourse with a request that follows from the argumentation. In fact, he wants to do everything to be faithful to his oath and not witness the pain of his father Jacob. The conclusion of the speech, as in classical rhetoric, consists of two phases: Judah first asks the Egyptian vizier to remain as his slave in place of Benjamin and then appeals to the vizier's feelings: "I could not bear to see the misery which my father would suffer" (v. 34).

According to the principles of classical rhetoric, the first two parts of the discourse, the *exordium* and the *narratio*, may be missing. The *exordium* could be missing if the speech were brief or if the urgency of a situation prompted the speaker to a sudden attack, inducing him to enter *in medias res* without delay.[36] In fact, even in discourses with the double ועתה one of the initial parts is sometimes omitted, i.e. the brief introduction (A) or the narration of the events of the past (B). Thus, among the discourses we have analysed, some are without the brief introduction (A), but begin directly with the narration (B): cf. Gen 45:4–16; Exod 3:7–10;

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33   Cf. Aletti *et al.*, *Lessico*, 93; Joosten, "Biblical Rhetoric," 22.
34   Cf. Garavelli Mortara, *Manuale*, 66; Joosten, "Biblical Rhetoric," 22.
35   Cf. Joosten, "Biblical Rhetoric," 21; Giuntoli, *Genesi 11,27–50,26*, 294.
36   Cf. Garavelli Mortara, *Manuale*, 63.

Josh 22:1–5; 2 Sam 19:10–11; 1 Kgs 5:17–20; 2 Chr 28:9–11; and Ezra 10:2–4. Another example is found in Solomon's short message to Hiram, king of Tyre, in 1 Kgs 5:17–20:

1) *Narratio*: Solomon, addressing Hiram, begins his message directly by recalling the past, during the time of his father David. He remembers that David could not build the temple because of the enemies surrounding him on all sides.

2) *Argumentatio*: with the first ועתה the discourse moves on to the argumentation, in which Solomon acknowledges that it is the Lord his God who has given him a time of peace, without enemies or threat of danger. He therefore declares his intention to build the temple, according to the word of the Lord given to his father David.

3) *Peroratio*: Solomon concludes the message with a request for material for the construction of the temple, namely the cedars of Lebanon, and he also asks for the help of the Sidonians, who are skilled in felling trees.

In other discourses the *narratio* (B) is missing, so that the introduction immediately proceeds to the *argumentatio* (C), introduced by the first ועתה 1 Sam 26:18–20; 1 Chr 29:10–19; 2 Chr 2:11–15. An example is David's prayer in 1 Chr 29:10–19:

1) *Exordium*: David begins his prayer to God in a tone of praise, recognizing *his greatness, power, glory, eternity, splendour*, but especially *his royal sovereignty* and *dominion* over all. (vv. 10–12) With this introductory eulogy, David hopes to enter into a relationship with God as sovereign and to elicit his benevolence.

2) *Argumentatio*: in this part of the discourse (vv. 13–17), introduced by the first ועתה, David acknowledges his own misery and that of his people, as well as the fact that everything that David has prepared for the construction of the temple is a gift from God. Then the important argumentation is introduced, which is that God loves uprightness and that David is presenting his offering with a sincere heart.

3) *Peroratio*: after the second ועתה, which brings the speech to its conclusion (vv. 17b–19), David precedes his request with the observation that all the people also brought their offering spontaneously and with joy. For this reason, David asks God to direct their hearts towards him and keep his son Solomon in faithful observance of God's commandments, precepts and statutes, so that he may construct the building for which he has made preparations.

It must be emphasized that in persuasive discourse, according to the principles of classical rhetoric, there are two fixed and mandatory elements, namely the *argumentatio* and the *peroratio*. As we can see, these two elements correspond to the *argumentatio* (C) and the *peroratio* (D) in the speeches with the double ועתה. In fact, they are never lacking and moreover are highlighted by the double ועתה. The comparison between the structure of speeches with the double ועתה and the *dispositio* in persuasive speeches according to classical rhetoric can be summarized in the following table:

Table 4. Speeches with the double ועתה according to classical rhetoric

Nº	Text	Exordium	Narratio	Argumentatio	Peroratio
		Brief introduction	**Narration of the facts** (*indicative* of the past tense)	**Argumentation** ועתה (usually *indicative* of the present or future)	**Conclusion** ועתה (*imperative, cohortative, jussive,* lō' + *imperfect*)
1.	Gen 44:18–34	v. 18	vv. 19–29	vv. 30–32	vv. 33–34
2.	Gen 45:4b–13	–	4b	5–7	8–13
3.	Exod 3:7–10	–	7–8	9	10
4.	Josh 22:2–5[37]	–	2–3	4a	4b–5
5.	Ruth 3:10–13	10a	10b	11	12–13
6.	1 Sam 24:18–22	18	19–20	21	22–23
7.	1 Sam 26:18–20	18–19a	–	19b	20
8.	2 Sam 2:5–7	5a	5b	6	7
9.	2 Sam 19:10–11	–	10a	10b–11a	11b
10.	1 Kgs 5:17–20	–	17	18–19	20
11.	1 Kgs 8:23–29	23	24	25	26–29
12.	1 Kgs 18:9–14	9	10	11–13	14
13.	1 Chr 29:10–19	10–12	–	13–17	17b–19
14.	2 Chr 2:11–15	11	–	12–13	14–15
15.	2 Chr 28:9–11	–	9	10	11
16.	Ezra 10:2–4	–	2a	2b	3–4
17.	Dan 9:4–19	4	5–14	15–16	17–19

In conclusion, the structure of the speeches with the double ועתה generally corresponds to the *dispositio* of the persuasive discourses of classical rhetoric. The comparison confirms that even in persuasive discourses involving a request with the double ועתה, the argumentation, introduced by the first ועתה, not only constitutes the central and essential part of the speech, which prepares and justifies the request, but also becomes the main persuasive element of the whole rhetorical composition. Moreover, thanks to the very particular characteristics of the particle ועתה, a structural

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37   In some texts the discourse is constructed with the triple use of ועתה: Josh 14:6–12; 1 Sam 25:24–31; 2 Sam 7:18–29; Ezra 9:6–15.

link is created between the introductory part (A and/or B), the argumentation (C) and the request (D).

3.4. Discourses with the Triple Use of the Phrase ועתה

Of the twenty or so discourses in our study, in four cases we find ועתה used not twice but three times: Josh 14:6–12; 1 Sam 25:24–31[38]; 2 Sam 7:18–29[39] (repeated in 1 Chr 17:16–27) and Ezra 9:6–15.[40] For example, in Caleb's discourse, in Josh 14:6–12, the triple use of ועתה occurs in vv. 10–12, and the argumentation takes place in two stages: Caleb relates to Joshua the facts of the past (B, vv. 6–9) regarding the exploration of the land and cites the oath Moses made to Caleb, who was forty years old at the time. The first ועתה introduces the important argumentation, that is, that the Lord kept his promise and kept him alive for forty-five years (C1, v. 10a). The second ועתה adds an update of the facts to Caleb's argumentation: now, as he speaks, he is eighty-five years old and is still able to fight. (C2, v. 10b) Only the third ועתה concludes the whole discourse with the request for the land (D, v. 12): "Now give me then this mountain." From the analysis, it is clear that the author, before

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38 In 1 Sam 25:24–31, the triple ועתה appears in vv. 26a, 26b and 27, and allows the author to present a more structured, two-part argumentation: God's action that preserves David from the sin of shedding blood (C1, v. 26a) and Abigail's wish that the enemies of David be like Nabal, repentant and submissive (C2, v. 26b). Cf. Brueggemann, *I e II Samuele*, 185.

39 The point of David's prayer is his request for God's blessing, expressed in the conclusion (D) and introduced by the third ועתה. Note that David's discourse departs from its central theme twice, indicated by the root דבר and returns to it twice with the use of the locution ועתה (C1, v. 25 and C2, v. 28). David's only argumentation for asking God's blessing is his confidence that God will fulfil his *promise* (דבר). Łach, *Księgi Samuela*, 377; Morrison, *2 Samuel*, 105; Brueggemann, *I e II Samuele*, 271–272; Auld, *I and II Samuel*, 424–426; Eslinger, *House of God*, 82–88.

40 Note that Ezra's prayer is actually a confession: it begins with the exposition of Israel's guilt in not remaining separate from the pagans, but in mixing with them by allowing mixed marriages (B, vv. 6–7). As a consequence of these sins, Israel suffered the drama of deportation. The prayer is dominated by penitential vocabulary: אשמתנו גדלה ;עונתינו רבו. The second part, introduced by the first ועתה in v. 8 (C1), brings the discourse to the current situation, in which Ezra acknowledges God's clemency in leaving a remnant of Israel and in assuring them of the favour of the king of Persia. At this point, we would expect a second ועתה and a conclusion with a request for forgiveness; instead, the second ועתה again introduces a confession of sins: "We have abandoned your commandments" (C2, v. 10). Ezra's prayer is transformed into an oracle which ends with the request (D) introduced by the third ועתה. Surprisingly, however, the request is not addressed to God, but on the contrary, it is God, quoted by Ezra, who addresses the following precept to his people: "Therefore, do not give your daughters to their sons, nor take their daughters for your children." The discourse then returns to the problem of the people's guilt, which the "remnant of Israel" recognizes before God. A question then emerges: why does Ezra's confession not end with a request for forgiveness addressed to God? The answer is simple: Ezra recognizes from the beginning that God has already shown mercy towards his people (vv. 8–9) and his concern is rather that the people desist from their illicit conduct. Ezra introduces this topic using the phrase ועתה a second time, taking up the theme of guilt and introducing the oracle consisting of two parts: 1) the presentation of the impurity of the local population, which constitutes the reason for not allowing mixed marriages; and 2) the request itself, in the form of God's commandment quoted by Ezra and introduced by the third ועתה.

concluding the speech with his request for the land due to him, uses ועתה twice, not only to specify the facts that emerge, but also to bring the argumentation back to the present moment (after a rather general sentence stating how the Lord has kept him alive, he points out that God has also kept him in excellent form). The structure of these discourses is shown in the following table:

Table 5. The structure of discourses with triple ועתה

Nº	Text	A/B	C1	C2	D
		Brief introduction / narrative (*indicative*)	**Argumentation I** ועתה (*indicative*)	**Argumentation II** ועתה (*indicative*)	**Conclusion III** ועתה (*imperative, cohortative, jussive, lō' + imperfect*)
1.	Josh 14:6–12	6–9	10a	10b	12
2.	1 Sam 25:24–31	24–25	26a	26b	27–31
3.	2 Sam 7:18–29	18–24	25	28	29
4.	Ezra 9:6–15	6–7	8–9	10–11	12–15

In summary, we can see that the last ועתה always introduces the final request, while the first two ועתה reveal their transitory character and are used to better articulate the argumentation. In such cases, the second ועתה can take on different functions: it can introduce a further clarification of the argumentation already presented after the first ועתה (cf. Josh 14:6–12); it can articulate the argumentation with more emphasis, distinguishing two different topics (cf. 1 Sam 25:24–31); it can bring the argumentation up to the present moment of the speaker, or bring the discourse back to the main topic, from which the speaker has departed (cf. 2 Sam 7:18–29 and Ezra 9:6–15), before presenting the request in the final conclusion. The triple use of ועתה occurs in only four speeches, but a study of these speeches confirms the conclusions of the previous investigations, namely that only the last ועתה has a truly conclusive character, while the first and the second serve to bring or retrace the speech back to its central topic.

At the beginning of this section, dedicated to the function of the double use of ועתה in the structural organization of discourses, we asked why the double or triple ועתה is used, rather than a simpler construction with only a final ועתה. From a rhetorical point of view, all the analysis of the discourses we have studied and their comparison with classical rhetoric reveal that the double or even the triple use of the phrase ועתה is used above all for stylistic reasons, to give the discourse persuasive force, thanks to the argumentation introduced with the first ועתה. When this particle

is used only once, it only allows the speaker to bring the speech to its conclusion. The dual use, by contrast, allows the speaker to bring the discourse to the "therefore" in the argumentation, which, as we have seen, is the decisive element in a persuasive discourse. In the speeches studied, this strategy is always used regardless of the complexity or urgency of the situation, the person to whom the speech is addressed, or the distance between the speaker and the interlocutor. The main reason for the use of the double ועתה lies in the persuasive force that the speech acquires because of the argumentation that precedes the request. The speaker would not have been able to produce this effect using the simpler construction with only one ועתה.

4. The Range of Speeches with the Double ועתה

The subject of our study so far has been the formal aspect of persuasive speeches with the double ועתה, their structure and the function of the locution ועתה in their rhetorical composition. Next, we intend to deal specifically with their content and literary context. Each discourse merits a separate rhetorical analysis, but this is beyond the scope of our study, which is limited to the double use of the phrase ועתה. We therefore intend to focus on analysing the context of speeches with double ועתה and classifying them according to situations and speakers.

4.1. Divine Discourses

Among the discourses with the double ועתה, there is only one divine discourse, found in Exod 3:7–10, and which has a juridical connotation. It begins with the *notitia criminis*, that is, the news of the oppression of the people of Israel in Egypt. This crime report reaches God through the cry of the oppressed: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings" (Exod 3:7). The cry for help from the oppressed in Egypt is addressed to God, who is the God of Israel. God then acts as a judge to restore justice, sending Moses to Egypt to free the oppressed.

4.2. Prayers and Conversations with God

The invocation of God as protector and defender of the people of Israel occurs in various discourses with the double ועתה, in which the person praying tries to obtain protection from God: 2 Sam 7:18–29 (cf. 1 Chr 17:16–27); 1 Chr 29:10–19; 1 Kgs 8:23–53 (2 Chr 6:14–42). It is significant that in all three texts the person praying is the king, who, in ancient Israel, was the defender, protector and judge of the people – and the mediator *par excellence* between God and his people. For example,

in 2 Sam 7:18–29 (cf. 1 Chr 17:16–27), King David seeks God's protection for his dynasty which, according to God's promise, should last forever. In the biblical world, a promise meant an irrevocable commitment. David recognizes and invokes the sovereignty of God, so that God will fulfil his promise.

Among the discourses studied, some concern the *rîḇ* between God and his people and express the sinners' search for reconciliation: Dan 9:4–19; Ezra 9:6–15; 10:2–4. These discourses belong to the broader semantic field of prayer, but they have a precise place and a precise function in the juridical dynamics of the controversy (*rîḇ*), that is, they try to lead the parties involved to reconciliation. These prayers are *supplications* and *intercessions* made up of two elements, namely an admission of guilt and a plea for forgiveness or reconciliation, as for example in Dan 9:4–19. Daniel confesses the sins of the people: *We have sinned, we have committed sins* (חטאנו ועוינו, vv. 5.15, in the indicative). The list of infidelities is very long and constitutes the narration of the facts, from which emerges the contrast between God's fidelity to the covenant and the sins of the people. Daniel's prayer ends with the people's plea for reconciliation with God, expressed with eight different imperatives: *listen* (occurring three times) (שׁמע), *make it shine* (אחר), *fold* (נטה), *open* (פקח), *look* (ראה), *forgive* (סלח), *turn around* (קשׁב) and *intervene* (עשׂה). Note that what prompts Daniel to ask God for reconciliation in the name of the people is God's power as liberator: "And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly" (v. 15). Perhaps here too the plea is addressed to the people of Israel to convince them on the one hand that they have sinned, and on the other, to help them understand how they can hope for a better future. The God of the past is also the God of the present and the future, because he is a faithful God and a God who forgives.

4.3. Discourses Involving Sovereigns

There are several discourses involving rulers, especially kings Saul, David, and Solomon. Some take the form of a legal controversy (*rîḇ*), in which the final request of the speaker is a plea for forgiveness. The request made by the guilty party, or by a defender in his place, essentially involves two elements: 1) the declaration of one's own fault, expressed in the *indicative*; and 2) the explicit request for forgiveness or a similar plea, expressed in the *imperative*, *jussive* or an equivalent form. The link between these two elements is emphasized by the particle ועתה, which indicates the logical correlation between confession and request.[41] The passages involving this kind of situation are: 1 Sam 24:18–22; 1 Sam 25:24–31; 1 Sam 26:18–20. The confession of guilt is symmetrical to the plea of innocence, which can be expressed in the form of

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41 Cf. Bovati, *Ristabilire*, 110.

a question.[42] In the controversy between Saul and David, in 1 Sam 26:18–20, David declares that he is innocent of Saul's unjust accusation and begs him to stop pursuing him, to the end that he would be "banished to serve other gods." The innocent David asks Saul, who pursues him unjustly, the reason for his guilt: "What have I done?" (כי מה עשׂיתי, v. 18, *indicative*). In the concluding question, David implores Saul not to allow his blood to fall to the ground far from the presence of the Lord (אל־יפל, v. 20, *jussive*).

Other discourses involving sovereigns have to do with political and commercial life. For example, in 1 Kgs 5:17–20 King Solomon writes a message to the king of Tyre, in which he uses a convincing political-religious argumentation (God has given peace and his promise) to support his request for the cedars of Lebanon for the building of the temple. In his reply to Solomon in 2 Chr 2:11–15, the king of Tyre praises the God of Israel and the intelligence of the king, thus yielding to Solomon's request to send the promised goods. In addition, the king of Tyre supports his words with a concrete gesture, namely by sending an expert craftsman. By contrast, the following discourses present a different aspect of the political sphere: in 2 Sam 2:5–7 David tries to persuade the men of Jabesh-Gilead to accept him as their new king. In 2 Sam 19:10–15 the people discuss the political crisis created by the revolt and death of Absalom, and remembering the merits of King David, they convince themselves to have David return to the throne.

4.4. Discourses in a Military Setting

Among the speeches with the double ועתה, two occur in a military context. In Josh 22:2–5, Joshua exhorts the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh to return to their homes and continue to serve the Lord faithfully, using a military type of diplomatic argumentation, namely that the Lord has fulfilled his promise and has given them peace. It is assumed that the Lord has thus created the conditions for a peaceful life dedicated to the faithful observance of the commandments. We find another context of war in 2 Chr 28:9–11, in which the prophet Oded denounces the guilt of the Israeli army for taking booty and for taking captive their kinsmen from Judah and Jerusalem. His speech is aimed at the release of the prisoners of war.

4.5. Discourses between Individuals in a Family

In Boaz's speech, in Ruth 3:10–13, Ruth says to Boaz: "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer" (כי גאל אתה, Ruth 3:9). Boaz acknowledges that he is a *goël* of Ruth (גאל אנכי), but says that there is a closer

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42 Cf. Bovati, *Ristabilire*, 94–95.

relative who can take on this role in his place (Ruth 3:12).[43] In his short speech, Boaz responds to Ruth by twice asking her to remain under his protection until the meeting with her closest relative. Another family context involves the reunion of Joseph and his brothers, in which we have the discourse of Judah in Gen 44:18–34 and that of Joseph in Gen 45:4b–13.

In summary, we can say that the scope of speeches with the double ועתה is varied, involving a variety of situations and speakers. Some discourses are of a legal nature, dealing with reconciliation in legal disputes (*rîḇ*) and the law of family solidarity, in which the closest relative is obliged to intervene as a "redeemer" (*goʾēl*) in difficult situations. It seems significant that many of the discourses we have studied concern the realm of the royal court and have a sovereign as the speaker or recipient. An analogous scenario is that of the relationship between God and his people. In this context we find various supplications and requests for forgiveness (*rîḇ*). Some texts present the political-diplomatic background, often exemplified in the events of kings Saul, David, and Solomon involving the military (war, peace, prisoners of war), commerce (exchange of goods) and politics (accepting David as king).

5. The Request for Forgiveness and the Origins of the Double Use of ועתה in Hebrew Rhetoric

In our analysis, we observed that the first instance of ועתה is used in persuasive discourses of request to introduce the argumentation, that is, the most convincing element of the speech. In fact, both the structure of the speech using the double ועתה and the concepts used by the speaker in the argumentation have persuasive value. They are used to convince the recipient to grant the request. We have noted that this strategy is used in simple situations, in complex, urgent, and less urgent situations, and between different types of interlocutors. We have, however, one more question: what is the origin of this rhetorical strategy in persuasive speeches?

We noted that in the request for forgiveness, the argumentation acquires a particular importance, because it no longer concerns the speaker or the circumstances, but the judge. In the last phase of our analysis, we shall therefore focus on the importance of the argumentation, introduced by the first ועתה in the request for forgiveness (*deprecatio*), which might reveal the origin of the rhetorical strategy of the double use of ועתה.

We observed that the confession of guilt in a judicial controversy (*rîḇ*) serves not only to admit the truth of the accusation, but is also intricately linked to the request

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43   Cf. de Vaux, *Le istituzioni*, 47.

for forgiveness. In fact, the guilty party takes the initiative and uses all his energy to get what he wants. Pietro Bovati further observes that:

> The supplicant interposes an account of the history that lies between the two parties who now find themselves in dispute; this calling to mind of the past has the effect of laying bare the nature of each as revealed in the acts each has committed. With regard to the innocent partner, this shows that it is characteristic of that person to want a relationship and to remain committed, without yielding, to upholding it.[44]

The guilty party in telling the story of this broken relationship, tells his listener that he (the listener) is "just," that it is in his nature to remain faithful to what he himself began. Regarding this relationship between the innocent and the guilty, Bovati states:

> The accuser's *rîb* brought into play a series of reasons to convince the other that the inevitable prospect was a just punishment; the supplication for pardon seeks reason for the opposite solution, which is that of just clemency. Whereas the accusation concerns the criminal, the request for pardon concerns the innocent (Num. 14.9; Ps. 51.3; Neh. 9.32; 2 Chron. 30.18 etc.) and tends to summarize all the arguments into a simple: forgive because you are just, forgive for the sake of your name, forgive because you are you (cf. Isa. 43.25), so that the justice which belongs to your being may be fully carried out (Jer. 14.7,21; Pss. 25.11; 79.9; Dan. 9.19).[45]

The petitioner often presents the request in the imperative. Bovati observes, however that the use of this verb form does not imply an order, because by confessing his guilt, the petitioner recognizes that the basis for the imperative contained in the petition lies in the accuser, who is recognized as truth and justice (cf. Dan 9:16.18; Ezra 9:15).

It should be noted that even in judicial discourse, according to classical rhetoric, both Cicero (*De inventione*, I, 11, 15) and Quintilian (*Institutio oratoria*, VII, 4, 17) recognize in the request for forgiveness, *deprecatio*, a form of judicial defence.[46] They consider it to be the lowest level of defence, because the accused acknowledges having committed an action contrary to the law. However, Quintilian writes that the last form of defence is justification: "Ultima est *deprecatio*" (*Institutio oratoria*, VII, 4, 17). Cicero instead adds an interesting observation, namely that the *deprecatio* or prayer does not consist of a defence of the act committed, but of a request for forgiveness of the act; he therefore concludes that this type of defense is usually not

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44   Bovati, *Re-Establishing*, 130.
45   Bovati, *Re-Establishing*, 131.
46   Cf. Lausberg, *Handbook*, §192.

exercised in court: "Deprecatio est in qua non defensio facti, sed ignoscendi postulatio continetur, hoc genus vix in iuducio probari potest" (*De inventione*, II, 34, 104). Even in the Jewish *rîḇ* the breach of justice can be re-established through the process of reconciliation between the two parties. In fact, the guilty party asks for clemency from his judge, the accuser, through the *deprecatio* or prayer for forgiveness. The judge, for his part, in a way embodies the judicial institution, so arguments are used in an appeal for leniency.[47]

Among the discourses studied above, the request for forgiveness as a form of defence by a guilty party is found in the following passages: in Abigail's discourse (1 Sam 25:24–31); in the request of Saul, who asks David for clemency for his descendants (1 Sam 24:18–22); in David's request when he is unjustly accused (1 Sam 26:18–20); in the speech of Shecaniah in which he suggests that the people can change their behaviour (Ezra 10:2–4); and above all in the supplications that Daniel and Ezra raise to God on behalf of the people (Dan 9:4–19) and (Ezra 9:6–15). The *deprecatio* uttered by the guilty, when composed only of the two elements, namely the declaration of his own fault and the request for forgiveness, is not sufficient in the face of the judge, who is also the sovereign or God. The admission of guilt (in the *narrative*) and the request for forgiveness (in the *conclusion*) must be accompanied by an argument that can convince the judge to grant leniency. Indeed, in this group of discourses, the argumentation following the first ועתה introduces this essential element, which no longer focuses on the guilty party, but appeals to the judge, to his responsibility, integrity and moral qualities, as well as his mercy and clemency. For example:

1) Abigail (1 Sam 25:24–31) in her argumentation refers to the integrity of David, whom God himself preserved from shedding blood with his own hand (v. 26).
2) In 1 Sam 24:18–22, Saul asks David for clemency for his descendants, appealing to the fact that David will surely become king and therefore ruler and judge in Israel.[48]
3) In 1 Sam 26:18–20, David, on the other hand, appeals to Saul's discernment and sense of justice.
4) In Dan 9:4–19, Daniel appeals to the power of God, revealed in the Exodus, when with a "strong hand" he brought Israel out of Egypt.
5) Ezra refers directly to the grace of God in the saving of a small "remnant of Israel" (Ezra 9:6–15).

In these discourses a guilty person asks for forgiveness. First, however, he confesses his guilt and appeals to the clemency, responsibility, sovereignty or justice of the judge, because only the judge will determine whether the guilty party will be acquitted or not. In fact, in a judicial context, it is absolutely necessary to appeal to

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47   Cf. Lausberg, *Handbook*, §192–194.
48   Cf. de Vaux, *Le istituzioni*, 157–159.

the one who has the power to decide on the matter. Thus, the need for an appeal to the judge could be at the origin of the double use of the phrase ועתה; it should not, however, be confused either with the narration of the facts or with the admission of guilt of the accused one. In the discourses we have analysed, this appeal is introduced by the first ועתה, which brings the discourse to the "therefore" of the argumentation. One can assume that later this strategy was also used in other persuasive speeches of request. It must be remembered that in most cases these speeches involve rulers and relate to the context of a royal court. This common denominator of the discourses analysed here points to their very precise literary basis, the trademark of the royal court or similar contexts, such as one's relationship with God, which did not allow a request to be addressed without appropriate argumentation, because of the distance between the speaker and the interlocutor.

Conclusion

The subject of our study has been a large group of Old Testament discourses that have a common feature, namely the double presence of the adverbial phrase ועתה. We began with questions raised by this double use of ועתה that we can now summarize: are we dealing with double-ended speeches? Why is the same phrase used twice, dividing the speech into several parts, and what is the origin of this stylistic construction?

Our investigation began with the presentation of the characteristics of the particle ועתה and the persuasive character of the speeches with its double use. We observed that the use of persuasive strategies in the various speeches studied is motivated by a particular difficulty in presenting the request, arising from the distance between the speaker and the interlocutor or from the particular nature of the request. Subsequently, the analysis of the rhetorical function of ועתה in the speeches studied led us to discover the differences between the first and second use of this particle in a discourse and to conclude that the first ועתה serves to signal the passage from the introductory part of the speech or the narration of past events to its central part, that is to say to the argumentation. Only the second ועתה leads the discourse to its conclusion, which is the point of the entire discourse, the real objective of the speaker, who presents his request at the end. This, then, is the common characteristic of all discourses with the double ועתה.

At this point we asked how a speaker organised his discourse toward the goal of delivering his final request. The analysis of the texts, the common points of the structure of the discourses and a comparison with the structure of persuasive speeches according to classical rhetoric allow us to conclude that the double use of the phrase

ועתה is an effective rhetorical device in clear and convincing speech. These texts, rather than being double-ended discourses, are persuasive rhetorical constructions in which the argumentation, introduced by the first ועתה, is the central, essential and obligatory part leading to the speaker's final request. In fact, the double ועתה allows the speaker to construct a rhetorical discourse composed of several internally connected parts, in which the concluding request (after the second ועתה) is supported by the argumentation (introduced with the first ועתה), which in turn had been prepared by a short introduction and/or a more or less developed narration of past events. The main elements therefore "hang" on the hinges of the two particles ועתה, and are merged into a logical unit, thanks to the consecutive meaning of this adverbial term.

This rhetorical strategy underscores the argumentation of the request, giving the speech greater persuasive force. In fact, a simple discourse with only one ועתה does not have the same persuasive force, because a single ועתה can introduce only the conclusion. A discourse with the double ועתה has greater persuasive power, because it allows the speaker to organize the argumentation in a precise, compact way, logically correlated with the request and aimed at achieving the desired effect, not only on the interlocutor within the narrative, but also on the reader, who is the "real" recipient of the story. In highly developed speeches, especially in prayers to God, which reflect complex situations of the person praying, even the third ועתה is used to bring the argumentation back to the "therefore," making the speech even more incisive. The double use of the phrase ועתה cannot, therefore, be attributed to the work of editors, but to an ordinary way of developing a persuasive discourse in classical Hebrew rhetoric, which has many points in common with the strategies developed by classical Greco-Latin rhetoric.

The "juridical" background,[49] present in some of the discourses analysed, can conclusively be considered to be their original literary context. In fact, in the *deprecatio*, in which the speaker hopes to be acquitted, the request could not be simply a claim, introduced only by the narration of the facts and repentance; rather, it required also the clemency of the judge. In this stylistic construction the double ועתה plays the technical role of creating the passages necessary for articulating the speech in a clear and convincing way. The double use of the particle ועתה thus proves to be an effective stylistic device in the persuasive speeches of Hebrew rhetoric, which are also found in contexts other than those of the settlement of disputes before a judge.

Translated by Debora Rienzi

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[49]   Several scholars assert that the model for the organization of persuasive discourse in classical rhetoric should be sought in the judicial genre. Cf. Garavelli Mortara, *Manuale*, 60–61. Similarly, Heinrich Lausberg (*Handbook*, §27) also believes that the exemplary model of rhetoric is the presentation of the question during the court trial.

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Verbum
Vitae

From an Apology for Catholicism to Theological Modernism: The Principle of Development in Alfred Loisy's Thought

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Abstract: This paper aims to show the reasons why Alfred Loisy's idea to develop an apology for Christianity was unsuccessful and led to his transition to the modernist position. It explores theological and fundamental issues underlying his ambitious program. Firstly, it discusses the concept of modernism, having in mind that Loisy himself opposed the accusations of his following modernism. Secondly, it synthetically presents the context and characteristics of Loisy's works to properly understand his idea of Christian apologetics. The subsequent section analyses Loisy's most important assumptions and the way he formulated his apologia, focusing on the issue of historical criticism and his application of John Henry Newman's idea of development to the history of religion. These analyses allow us to conclude that by applying the historical-critical method, Loisy did not avoid adapting incorrect philosophical assumptions and improper application of Newman's development of Christian doctrine to his reflections on the history of religion.

Keywords: Alfred Loisy, apology, modernism, historical-critical method, history of religion

Alfred Loisy was called the "father" of Catholic modernism in France.[1] He began his scientific activity at the Catholic Institute of Paris, where he had studied (1881) and was later appointed instructor; he also defended his doctoral dissertation there (1890). However, as early as 1893, following the interference of the Cardinal of Paris, Loisy was dismissed from his teaching position because of his views on the infallibility of the Sacred Scripture.[2]

During those years, he formulated his program of Christian apologetics, which aimed at reconciling Christian doctrine with modern science. His later publications that presented his views, i.e., a series of articles published in *Revue du clergé français*, and predominantly his works entitled *L'Évangile et l'Église* (1903) and *Autour d'un petit livre* (1903), as well as disputes over them, first led to the listing of his five works on the Index of prohibited books, and then in 1908, to Loisy's abandonment of the Catholic Church in response to the decree *Lamentabili* promulgated by the Holy

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[1]   Sanecki, "Loisy Alfred," 1328. The term "father of modernism" was coined by Marie-Joseph Lagrange (*M. Loisy et le modernisme*, 136).

[2]   Cf. Goichot, *Alfred Loisy*, 17–29.

Office and Pius X's encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*.[3] In 1908, Loisy was excommunicated.[4]

Alfred Loisy's life and scientific activity have already been addressed by numerous studies.[5] In more recent works, his arguments have not been refuted *en bloc*; some contemporary authors have pointed to valuable elements of his scholarly output. It suffices to give two meaningful examples: (1) In his commentary on the evangelical parables, Augustyn Jankowski, a catholic author, includes a reference to Loisy's work *Études évangéliques* (Paris: Picard 1902).[6] (2) In his introduction to an edition of Loisy's chosen texts entitled *Ecrits évangéliques* (ed. C. Chauvin) (Paris: Cerf 2002), Charles Chauvin states the following: "But I dare to conclude these few pages of presentation by saying that I deplore the fact that I have been so rarely informed of the existence of Loisy's studies on the Gospels. [...] His comments would have brought me answers to the many questions posed by the interpretation of the New Testament, which in my opinion are still largely valid today."[7]

Currently, many authors are critical of the harsh assessment of Loisy's thought and emphasize that modernism itself, which Loisy was accused of, was erroneously defined by Pius X.[8] Accordingly, this is yet another reason to ask why Loisy's idea of Christian apologetics ended with his transition to the modernist positions. Seeking an answer to this question, we will first specify the concept of modernism and the way it should be construed from a contemporary perspective. Next, an outline of the most important stages in the development of Loisy's thought will be made to indicate the major reasons that determined his departure from Catholic orthodoxy.

1. The Concept and Meaning of Modernism

The concept of modernism in Catholic publications was shown by Charles Périn.[9] In his dissertation, he used this term to describe errors related to secularism, rationalism, and the tendency to remove God from social life. Later, especially after

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3   Cf. Loisy, *Simples réflexions*.
4   Raffelt, "Loisy," 1041.
5   The most important studies include: Laplanche – Biagioli – Langlois, *Autour d'un petit livre*; Goichot, *Alfred Loisy*; Hill, "Loisy's *L'Évangile et l'Église*"; Hill, "More than a Biblical Critic"; Burke, "Loisy's Faith"; Provencher, "The Origin and Development."
6   Jankowski, *Królestwo Boże*, 258.
7   "Mais j'ose conclure ces quelques pages de présentation en disant que je déplore que l'on m'ait si peu souvent signalé l'existence des études de Loisy sur les Evangiles. [...] Ses commentaires m'auraient apporté des réponses, à mon avis largement valables encore de nos jours, aux multiples questions que pose l'interprétation du Nouveau Testament" (Chauvin, "Présentation," 35).
8   Cf. Borto, *Magisterium Kościoła*, 86–87.
9   Périn, *Le modernisme dans l'église*.

the publication of Karl Braig's book,[10] "modernism" was construed as erroneous views, primarily concerning doctrine and related to neo-Protestant subjectivist-psychological trends.

However, the most widespread definition of modernism at that time was presented by Pope Pius X in his encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* (1907). Reacting to Loisy's views, among other things, he stated that modernism was a heretical system covering numerous aspects of human life, and as such, it meant heresy in religion, a revolution in politics, and falsehood in philosophy. Hence, Pius X saw the views of individual modernists as a consequence of adopting a comprehensive vision that opposed Christianity. In his encyclical, he emphasized that when it comes to modernism, "their system does not consist in scattered and unconnected theories but in a perfectly organized body, all the parts of which are solidly joined so that it is not possible to admit one without admitting all" (*PDG* 39).

Loisy refuted this definition of modernism. He argued that the encyclical artificially combined the various trends characteristic of the epoch with those arising from attempts to renew the Christian doctrine. Moreover, he was convinced that no one believed in modernism defined as a certain system and a synthesis of all heresies that were secretly smuggled into the Church's teaching; he claimed that modernism existed only in the minds of those who invented and presented it. On the other hand, he believed that those who were wrongly labeled modernists aimed at adapting the Catholic religion to the current needs and challenges arising from various dimensions and did not want to depart from the Catholic truth.[11]

In our day, this dispute can and should be looked at less hectically and explored through a perspective that allows one to weigh all the arguments. Contemporary publications, especially in the field of historiography, have upheld Loisy's views. It is argued that the modernism defined by Pius X, i.e., the so-called "ideal modernism," has never existed.[12] There were only trends and individual views that partially reflected the encyclical's diagnosis. However, it should be remembered that the Pope did not want to mention specific people in the encyclical but rather refer to the views and trends that emerged in theological reflection. Thus, the identity of the modernist described in the encyclical is not historical, but ideal-typical and reflects the most important features that could be distinguished in various modernist views and trends. As such, the fact that there was no historical example of what was defined as modernism in the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* does not mean that Pius X was completely wrong.[13]

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10 Braig, *Der Modernismus und die Freiheit*.
11 Loisy, *Simples réflexions*, 15, 254–255.
12 Talar, "The Synthesis of All Heresies," 498.
13 Izquierdo, "Cómo se ha entendido el 'modernismo teológico,'" 36.

It seems that it was Léonce de Grandmaison who best defined the challenge and essence of modernism a few dozen years after the publication of the encyclical. Looking at the problem in retrospect, he stated that the modernists' theology depended on fulfilling two conditions. Firstly, it sought to face conflicts in the field of Christian doctrine or morality that arose between the traditional and modern interpretations of certain aspects of Christianity. Secondly, the modernists assumed that it was the traditional position that had to be modified or completely rejected to resolve these conflicts.[14] This is exactly what happened with Loisy, who initially set himself the task of defending the traditional Christian doctrine by incorporating data from modern scientific reflection but eventually abandoned the Catholic faith.[15]

2. Program of an Apology for Catholicism

Alfred Loisy began his theological studies at the Grand Séminaire de Châlons-en-Champagne. As he recalled, he had felt some discomfort there. While the content and practices of faith were valuable to him in the dimension of experience, he found their scholastic explanations unacceptable.[16] According to Loisy's biographers, he did not receive a solid theological education at the seminary, nor did he gain it during his further specialist studies at the Catholic Institute of Paris since he focused on Oriental languages. In turn, at the Sorbonne, Loisy attended lectures given by Ernest Renan, a Protestant exegete, from whom he drew knowledge on the use of the historical method in interpreting biblical texts.[17]

In 1881, Alfred Loisy began his academic career at the Catholic Institute of Paris. Soon after his enrolment, he held the position of a tutor (*répétiteur*), then a lecturer (*maître de conférences*), and following the defense of his doctorate in 1890, of a full professor.[18] His apologetic interests at the time were closely related to the context in which he started his academic career. Two publications on the life of Jesus had appeared shortly before that — one published by David Friedrich Strauss (1835) and the other by Ernest Renan (1863). Both denied Jesus' divinity and were thus widely echoed. This was also the time of the development of historical and philological research on the Bible in the Protestant world. There was significant interest

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14   de Grandmaison, "Une nouvelle crise", 644.
15   For more information on this topic, see Ronald Burke "Loisy's Faith," although Burke thinks that the Church's evaluation of Loisy's views was unfair and agrees with Loisy that "the heresies of today are part of the orthodoxy of tomorrow" (*ibidem*, 164).
16   Loisy, *Choses passés*, 34.
17   Hill, "La Science Catholique," 42.
18   Poulat, *Histoire, dogme et critique*, 31.

in the origin of the Pentateuch and its authorship; the traditionally adopted biblical chronology was questioned.[19]

Loisy felt the need to contribute, through his works and lectures, to the opening of the Catholic exegesis to scientific advances so that it could reach the level of the Protestant one. Along these lines, he wanted to defend the Church and its theology, which he also desired to renew. However, since some of his publications and his exegesis lectures raised doubts, Loisy was deprived of the possibility of teaching exegetical topics (though he could still lecture in Oriental languages). Later, the publication of his paper on biblical inspiration led to his dismissal from the Catholic Institute of Paris (1893) and appointment as chaplain to a girls' college in Neuilly, which was run by nuns. Furthermore, the journal *Enseignement biblique* that he had founded was suspended.[20]

Despite being dismissed from his teaching position, Loisy pursued his goal of introducing the fruits of modern exegesis into the field of Catholic Bible research, as evidenced by the fact that he founded the journal *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuse* (1896) and published exegetical articles.[21] Working as a chaplain, he was obliged to teach the Catholic catechism to young girls. Therefore, he focused on issues related to dogma and the development of religion. In his memoirs, he claimed that at that point he no longer had the naive faith of his childhood days and did not accept virtually any of the articles of faith except that Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate. His understanding of religion increasingly evolved towards treating it as an unfathomable, dominant force in the history of men, which, while marked by some limitations, errors, and abuses, still made a huge contribution to the moral life of humanity. Moreover, Loisy's memoirs show that he wanted to prove that it was Christianity and the Catholic Church that best expressed the idea of religion.[22]

This belief led him to write a manuscript that was not initially published. Entitled *La crise de foi dans le temps présent. Essais d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*, the manuscript was extremely extensive (12 chapters) and was completed between July 1898 and May 1899.[23] It was a comprehensive project of Christian apologetics, partly inspired by John Henry Newman's thoughts on the development of dogma.[24]

Loisy soon began publishing parts of his elaborate work in *Revue du clergé français* under the nom de plume of Alfred Firmin.[25] He also included some sections

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19 Guasco, *Le modernisme*, 60–61.
20 Poulat, *Histoire, dogme et critique*, 31; Guasco, *Le modernisme*, 65–69. More on this subject, see Ciappa, *Storia e teologia*.
21 Loisy, *Choses passés*, 171.
22 Loisy, *Choses passés*, 165.
23 Loisy, *Choses passés*, 171. The entire text was published a few dozen years ago, along with his several papers as commentaries to Loisy's thought – cf. Loisy, *La crise de la foi*.
24 Loisy, *Choses passés*, 174.
25 This concerns the following articles: Firmin, "Le développement chrétien"; Firmin, "La théorie individualiste de la religion"; Firmin, "La définition de la religion"; Firmin, "Les origines du Nouveau

of his study in *L'Évangile et l'Église* (1902), where he commented on A. von Harnack's theses contained in *Das Wesen des Christentums* (Leipzig: Hinrichs 1899; published in French in 1902). Harnack's main thought boiled down to the argument that the message Jesus proclaimed was that of the Kingdom of God and God as Father, and the rest was a kind of envelope for this original message, which Catholicism distorted. Loisy's *L'Évangile et l'Église* marked the first time when he undertook a public discussion on issues that were much wider than those related to biblical exegesis since they included the development of dogma, the establishment of the Church, and Gospel data about Jesus.[26]

Published a year later, Loisy's book titled *Autour d'un petit livre* can be described as his self-apology, which defended his theses contained in *L'Évangile et l'Église*.[27] His later works are characterized by both adherence to the previously adopted assumptions in his way of practicing exegesis, and polemics against those who questioned his theses — including the Magisterium of the Church. Loisy moved from the position of an apologist to a modernist position, in line with the latter of the above-mentioned understandings of modernism.

It seems essential to determine the reason why Loisy's apologetics failed, especially since in retrospect some of his postulates cannot be considered erroneous (suffice it to mention the questioning of Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch, emphasizing the historical dimension of Revelation, etc.).

3. Historical Criticism as the Basis for Loisy's Apologia

The idea of Loisy's apology for Christianity was preceded by his scientific work in the field of biblical studies which was closely related to his adoption of the historical-critical method. Loisy created his Christian apologetics program believing that such an apology might be conducted at the level of historical studies. In his introduction to *L'Évangile et l'Église*, he supported his conviction by stating that he was not seeking a comprehensive apology for Catholicism or dogma, but he wanted to examine it from a historical perspective, and that he was compelled to do this by

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Testament I–II"; Firmin, "L'idée de Révélation"; Firmin, "Les preuves et l'économie de Révélation." A bibliography of Loisy's works can be found at http://alfred.loisy.free.fr (access 3.03.2022). See also Hill, "Loisy's *L'Évangile et l'Église*," 75–76. See also: Talar, *Prelude to the Modernist Crisis*.

26   Borto, *Magisterium Kościoła*, 69–70. A detailed analysis of the changes introduced by Loisy has been made by Rosanna Ciappa ("La réforme," 565–579).

27   This conviction was made by Christoph Theobald, who compared Loisy's unpublished work and the content of *Autour d'un petit livre rouge* as well as Loisy's memoirs concerning this theme – Teobald, "L'apologétique historique d'Alfred Loisy," 686.

analyzing the theses put forth by authors whose works dealt with Christianity from this perspective.[28]

This first foundation of Loisy's apologia played a decisive role in the development of his ideas and would accompany him throughout his inquiries. For him, the decisive criterion of truth and the basic point of reference was the conviction that the historical and the historical-critical method itself was a tool for studying historical reality. Nevertheless, he did not define this basic criterion in detail, nor was he fully aware of the limitations of the historical-critical method. This can be seen, for example, in his discussion on Christological issues. In his outline of Christian apologetics, Loisy referred to Matthew 11:25–30 (Luke 10:20–24), a passage about the exclusive knowledge of the Father that Jesus had. He stated that the whole message of the Galilean Gospel was revealed precisely in these verses.[29] Yet in *L'Évangile et l'Église*, where he examined the same fragment, he changed this statement. Since Adolf von Harnack — with whom Loisy disagreed — based his Christological arguments on this passage, Loisy pointed out that it did not so much reflect Jesus' conscious understanding as express Christian ideas that were developed later.[30]

As Rosanna Ciappa shows, this change was partly influenced by Loisy's study of German critical exegesis, which referred to the idea of the so-called eschatological school. Its followers believed that the eschatological perspective and the idea of the Kingdom of God which was to come were central to historical Jesus' preaching. Loisy agreed with the most radical conclusions of this school, which deemed all ideas that were inconsistent with the message of the coming Kingdom to be non-historical. This also influenced Christology because if Jesus had foretold the coming of the Kingdom, he would only become the Messiah in the future, and as such, did not announce his divine identity as a present state.[31] Hence, Loisy later concluded that the verses about Jesus' special knowledge of the Father did not reflect history but rather the future theological thought of the Gospel writers; this also applied to the words about bread and wine in the synoptic account of the Last Supper.[32] This significant evolution of Loisy's thought can also be seen in his rejection of the idea of an agreement between the historical and theological points of view, as expressed in Chapter IX of his unpublished apologetic work, which is in favor of emphasizing the difference and autonomy of theological and historical reflection.[33] As a consequence, Loisy would publish interesting, elaborate exegetic commentaries (e.g. *Le Quatrième Évangile*), and at the same time, would not take into account the Gospel data, which were regarded as unreliable from the historical standpoint, in the area of historical criticism.

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28   Loisy, *L'Évangile et l'Église*, VII–VIII.
29   Loisy, *La crise de la foi*, 180.
30   Loisy, *L'Évangile et l'Église*, 75–76.
31   Ciappa, "La réforme," 580.
32   Loisy, *Mémoires*, I, 456.
33   Theobald, "L'apologétique historique," 679–680.

This allows us to draw the first conclusion. The historical-critical method adopted by Loisy cannot be considered neutral, a fact which was captured by Cesar Izquierdo in his discussion of the correspondence between Maurice Blondel and Loisy after the publication of *L'Évangile et l'Église*. The correspondence concerned the understanding of the Revelation in history, and especially the understanding of the person of Jesus Christ.[34] As noted by Izquierdo, after an exchange of views and further arguments, Blondel asked Loisy whether he believed that Jesus had a clear awareness of his divinity, emphasizing that this question revealed Loisy's assertion underlying his thinking, which led to the change in his beliefs. This is because the tension between faith and history can ultimately be understood by answering the question of whether it is possible to speak of Jesus' divine consciousness.[35]

It was the assumption that history as such cannot be influenced by God's actions and presence and should be studied only using critical methods seeking only human and natural causes that became one of the most crucial reasons why Loisy turned to modernist positions. Commenting on Joseph Ratzinger's thought on contemporary exegesis, Scott Hahn stated that this philosophical assertion, left at the point of departure, has enormous consequences for the fruits of exegesis.[36] Indeed, this assumption also influenced Loisy's theology-related thinking.

Accordingly, although Loisy wanted to show the historical character of Christian Revelation in his theology, he did it in the context of contemporary theology that regularly construed the Revelation in an ahistorical and intellectual way; in the end, he changed from an apologist into an apostate because he failed to see the threat hidden in the historical method and its assumptions. Here, Loisy touched upon one of the most difficult fundamental-theological issues, i.e., the foundations of credibility, or in other words, the principles based on which one should recognize something as truth. However, this problem goes far beyond the analysis carried out in this article.[37]

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34   Cf. Izquierdo, "Correspondencia entre M. Blondel y A. Loisy," 199–227.
35   Marlé, *Au coeur de la crise moderniste*, 110.
36   Hahn, *Covenant and Communion*, 32.
37   One of the latest theological works on this issue published in Polish is Kaucha, *Cóż to jest prawda?*, which is worth consulting here, esp. pp. 15–66.

4. The Idea of Development as the Second Foundation of Loisy's Apologetic Thought

Loisy's second essential premise that served as a foundation for his apology for Catholicism was the idea of development. He was inspired by John Henry Newman's thoughts contained in his work *On the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845). Newman pointed to the development of Christian doctrine and the criteria that would allow us to distinguish between an authentic development and a distortion of doctrine. Loisy first reflected on this subject in the unpublished apology[38] and later published his comments in *Revue du clergé français*.[39] Rosanna Ciappa notes that Loisy did not make any major changes in his published text.[40]

Loisy referred to Newman's work in two ways. On the one hand, he enthusiastically stated that Newman was able to show that development was at the heart of Christian doctrine. On the other hand, he accused Newman of not extending his reflection to the history of Christianity and religion but limiting himself to ideas. According to Loisy, it was precisely the principle of development that could help him respond to the challenges that the history of ancient religions posed to Catholic apologetics.[41]

Therefore, Loisy wanted to use the idea of development adapted to Christianity to present Catholicism as an authentic extension and development of earlier religions. In his opinion, Christianity was the proper fruit of the development of post-exilic Judaism that developed from faith in Yahweh in the epoch of the prophets and was preceded by primitive Yahwism that in itself arose from the religion of the patriarchs — a belief originating in the religion of prehistoric man.[42]

For Loisy, the law of development extended throughout history and the process of Revelation, which was always realized in the same way, both before and after Jesus' coming. Loisy's understanding of development was akin to that of biological development — proceeding from a seed to a mature plant.[43]

Considering this vision of religion's history and this understanding of the Revelation, two remarks must be made. Firstly, Loisy made an unauthorized transference of the principle of development from the sphere of ideas to historical reality, which resulted in a significant simplification and the adoption of the implicit assumption that the historical Revelation did not play a decisive role in the formation of Judaism, and then of Christianity. This way of interpreting the history of religion failed to consider the "breakthroughs" which could be observed in history, and which cannot

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[38]   Cf. Loisy, *La crise de la foi*, 75–84.
[39]   The text was published as Firmin, "Le développement chrétien."
[40]   Ciappa, "La réforme," 567.
[41]   Loisy, *La crise de la foi*, 76.
[42]   Loisy, *La crise de la foi*, 80–81.
[43]   Laplanche, "Une Église immutable," 544.

be explained by referring only to the idea of development. Its most telling example is the rise of Christianity, which grew out of Judaism not only due to evolution — the adoption and transformation of what was the content of post-exilic Judaism — but also due to the separation from Judaism and emergence of completely new realities.

The second remark was formulated by Harvey Hill who claimed that while Loisy followed Newman's thoughts in terms of theory, he did not do so in terms of practice. Indeed, Loisy described in detail Newman's seven criteria for distinguishing between an authentic development and distortions of doctrine, yet he never applied them in his reflection on the historical development of religion, nor did he consider Newman's crucial remark that one should refer to the authority of the Church and its teaching because of the difficulties in applying these criteria.[44]

It is thus understandable why, after his excommunication, Loisy reduced the role of religion only to functions related to teaching morality and did not accept dogmas but rather interpreted them in a radically symbolic way, considering them to be incompatible with the scientific era since they contained mythological content.[45] This evolution of Loisy's thought — also caused by the fact that the Church condemned his books and that Loisy himself felt excluded — resulted from his conviction that development was deeply embedded in the history of mankind.

Conclusion

Alfred Loisy was a well-known representative of modernism. Although the primary aim of his works was to renew Catholic exegesis, the idea of renewing all theology and defending Catholic thought against the challenges posed by modern science was a principal motif of his research. It was these works, created to provide an apologia for Catholicism, which largely contributed to the condemnation of his views and his departure from the Church.

This happened even though some of Loisy's postulates were not erroneous; for instance, the claim that the historical nature of the Revelation should be considered was accepted at the Second Vatican Council (cf. *Dei Verbum*, no. 2–4). Nonetheless, Loisy failed to implement a project of an apology that would lie within the boundaries of orthodoxy. This was due to several vital reasons. Firstly, one must note his lack of thorough theological preparation: he did not receive a solid education at the seminary and during his specialized studies. The second major reason was Loisy's acceptance of the historical-critical method in its radical form, thus introducing ambiguity

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44   Hill, "La Science Catholique," 56.
45   Moran, "Loisy's Theological Development," 444.

into his reflection as to the possibility of God's revelation in history. Finally, the third reason was his illegitimate and wrong application of Newman's concept of development to the history of religion.

Thus, the statement "[t]he heresies of today are part of the orthodoxy of tomorrow" is sometimes recalled while evaluating Loisy's works. As regards his apologia, it should be said that it was unorthodox in two fundamental points: the inability to demonstrate God's manifestation in history and the misunderstanding of development in the history of religion.

Translated by Maria Kantor

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Verbum
Vitae

Torah Overtones in the Epilogues of Qoheleth

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Abstract: This article focuses on the two epilogues of Qoheleth, namely 12:9–11 and 12:12–14 and is an attempt to unravel the relationship of the words of the sage with Torah, the latter featuring as *miṣwōṯ* in v. 13. It is often held that these epilogues were written by someone other than the author of the book at large, and that their function (especially that of the second one), is to highlight the importance of the Torah over and against the words of the wise. Such a position is hereby contested and a rereading of these epilogues is offered. Two specific questions are addressed: Are these epilogues, particularly the second one, meant to downplay the words of the wise in relation to Torah? Conversely, how do the images employed, namely those of the goad, the nails, and the shepherd, possibly constitute a subtle reference to the divine commandments given by God himself? An analysis of the structures of the two epilogues and of the concepts used – this being done especially through an intertextual reading – is carried out hand in hand with a careful translation of the most pertinent texts. Moreover, the similarity of salient concepts found in the epilogues to Pentateuchal and Prophetic texts that have a pertinent canonical position is highlighted, thereby bearing light on the conclusion of Qoheleth. Finally, certain rabbinical interpretations are employed to further unpack the meaning of the texts in question. This exercise leads the author to hold that a positive relationship between sapiential wisdom and Torah is made both in the final epilogue, where the commandments are mentioned, and also in the first epilogue.

Keywords: Epilogues, Torah, goads and nails, similes and metaphors

Given Qoheleth's nonconformist understanding of reality, it is not surprising that the word *tôrāh* does not feature in his writings. The related term *miṣwōṯ* ('commandments') is found in the penultimate verse of the book (12:13). Stuart Weeks has pointed out that the phrase "keep his commandments" at the end of the book "is so quintessentially Deuteronomic... that it could hardly but have been read by early Jewish readers as a reference to Torah, and the author of the verses must surely have been aware of these connotations."[1] Because of this reference to God's commandments and to the fear of God, as well as other elements, 12:9–14, which are the last six verses of the Book of Qoheleth, rightly constitute its epilogue or, more likely, its two epilogues.

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[1] Weeks, "Fear God," 112. However, as far as Qoheleth's own understanding of this concept goes, Stuart Weeks is of the opinion that the monologue of the sage shows that he would have accepted the notion of divine commandments given to human beings, but by no means does his work relate to a divinely revealed Torah given authoritatively in the past (cf. *ibidem*, 115).

In terms of the relevance of this final section for canonical considerations, Brevard S. Childs had identified 12:9–14 as one of the few texts in Scripture which mostly betray a particular attention to the canon.[2] It might be tempting to conclude – and several have indeed opted for this position – that the *miṣwōṯ* are here being presented over and against the sage's reflections, such that human words would pale into insignificance before the divine words.[3] This paper seeks to weigh against such an understanding of these epilogues by analysing their structure and the concepts encapsulated in both, with particular attention paid to the similes of the goads and nails in v. 11. It is my contention that the link between sapiential wisdom and Torah is made not only in vv. 13–14 but also prior to them, in the first epilogue, precisely through the employment of these two similes. Here, we also find the intriguing metaphor of the shepherd (v. 11), which various scholars have seen as being a reference to God. Though this paper gravitates towards such an interpretation, it must be stated that not enough attention has been given to the metaphorical imagination elicited by the images of the goad and the nail in this regard. Hence, what follows is an unpacking of these concepts in order to extract their fullest possible meaning for the interpretation of the text and its consequences for the relationship of Qoheleth to Torah.

1. Structure and Translation

The final section of Qoheleth is believed to contain two epilogues, though scholars have different opinions regarding their precise delimitation.[4] Moreover, it is generally agreed that the voice heard in the epilogues differs from that of the body of the book, both because Qoheleth is spoken of in the third person and also for reasons related to content or style.[5] The practically identical statements in 1:2 and 12:8 on the meaninglessness of life suggest that v. 9 onwards form an epilogue.[6]

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2   Brevard Childs (*Introduction*, 585) states: "Few passages in the OT reflect a more overt consciousness of the canon than does this epilogue."

3   Historical critical analysis of the end of Amos too, namely Amos 9:11–15, led to seeing this final text as overturning former statements made in the book: contrast 5:2 to 9:11; cf. Blenkinsopp, *History*, 77.

4   James L. Crenshaw (*Old Testament Wisdom*, 143) points out that the epilogues are variously divided into vv. 9–11 and 12–14 or 9–12 and 13–14; also see Mazzinghi, *Ho cercato*, 316–317.

5   Cf. Fox, "Frame-Narrative," 84–85, 103. However, it is Michael V. Fox's contention that Qoheleth is a persona whom the author wants us to believe is a real figure and whose words are mediated by the author of the whole composition, that is both the frame-narratives and the body of the book itself; cf. *ibidem*, 90–91 ("composition by a single author"… "That certain words are in a different voice does not mean that they are by a different hand"), 105–106.

6   On the concept of the meaning of life or the lack of it as expressed through the term הבל, see Onwukeme, *The Concept of* Hebel.

Norbert Lohfink offers a concentric arrangement of the book in which 1:2–3 and 12:8 are indicated as its frame.[7]

The two epilogues are usually taken to be vv. 9–11 and 12–14. The use of ויתר at the beginning of each section alludes to this division, with this possibly being interpreted either as a noun or as an adverb.[8] However, the function of v. 12a must be considered carefully. Semantically, the subject in v. 12a is the same as that in v. 11, namely "the words of the wise" – note that מהמה ("by them") in v. 12a is in the 3rd person plural;[9] this fact was not picked up by LXX. Ideologically, v. 12a agrees with what precedes it as it is clearly biased in favour of such words, shunning anything in addition to them. Though the ʾaṯnāḥ of v. 12 breaks the verse into bicola, it is significant that מהמה is in emphatic position. They are given importance because it is *by them* that the listener will be warned (הזהר v. 12).[10] Hence, v. 12a serves as a hinge that connects the two epilogues, the second of which begins more precisely in v. 12b.

V. 11 will be singled out for translation since it is the focus of this paper and happens to be somewhat obscure, as can be attested even from the original sources. The expression דברי חכמים is an indefinite construct chain that should be translated, contra most modern translations, as "words of wise people," rather than "the words of the wise." LXX confirms this with its indefinite λόγοι σοφῶν. The inseparable preposition כ makes the references to the goads and nails similes in relation to the words of the wise. Here, the reader can clearly detect tenors (the words and the בעלי אספות) and two vehicles (goads and nails), and he/she must therefore relate the two domains no less than when metaphors are employed.[11] That the goads and pegs mentioned are *both* similes of these 'words of wise people' is supported by LXX and VUL, but MT's synonymous parallelism places the nails in relation to the rather obscure expression בעלי אספות. The synonymous parallelism employed here has a chiastic structure.[12] According to Marcus Jastrow, the term אספות means "gatherings of scholars, councils."[13] In this case, it would translate as "the lords of the councils." Alternatively, בעל could be taken to have a figurative function, hence meaning "sayings of gatherings of

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7   Lohfink, *Qoheleth*, 8.
8   In the first case it would translate as "And an addition," whilst in the second it would be "And moreover": cf. Mazzinghi, *Ho cercato*, 319, who translates "Un (altra) aggiunta" for the former.
9   Note that the construction "*by* them" is similar to "*by* one shepherd" in the preceding verse, both of which employ the preposition מן. It is intriguing that Paul Joüon (*Grammaire*, 132d) points out that in prose this preposition rarely expresses the cause of an action, that is by whom it is done, but it does so in Qoh 12:11 ("*ils sont donnés par un seul pasteur*").
10   Conversely, for Manfred Görg ("זהר," 43), here this verb implies admonition because of what follows it, rather than what precedes it.
11   Antje Labahn ("Wild Animals," 71, 84) speaks of two instances of a simile which functions as "a marked metaphor."
12   Cf. Mazzinghi, *Ho cercato*, 332: A (words) – B (like goads) – B′ (like nails) – A′ (sayings…).
13   Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 89. Also see Isa 24:22 for its only other occurrence in the MT. The hapax συναγμάτων ('collection') by which the term is translated in the LXX is not of much help.

scholars," or "sayings of collections."[14] The former translation can also be derived if דברי is taken to have double-duty, resulting in דברי בעלי אספות.[15]

The verse is dominated by assonance through the repetition of the sound *–ot* (ות x 3). Every single lexeme is in the plural form except for the last two words (מרעה אחד), which is in apposition with the two similes employed and seems to be a small though significant addendum. The verse can be translated as follows:

> Words of wise people are like the goads, and like planted (i.e. fixed) nails
> *are* sayings of collections, given by one shepherd.

The entire verse in the MT gives the impression that the author compromised the meaning of the text for the sake of creating a pleasant poetic rhythm. Yet, despite the difficulty with the expression בעלי אספות, the synonymous relationship between the concepts of goads and nails is evident, as is the relationship of the shepherd to both.

2. A Positive Assessment of Qoheleth in the Epilogues

In analysing the function of the epilogue, Michael V. Fox states that the epilogist advocates a respect towards Qoheleth and also a particular distance.[16] Though he acknowledges that Qoheleth searched for upright and true words (v. 10), he does not state that his project was successful. This is compounded by Fox's negative assessment of goads and nails, as will be seen below. In my opinion, Qoheleth does not receive such a pessimistic assessment in the epilogues. A primary indication that our sage is being honoured rather than devalued comes from the very first verse of these epilogues. Luca Mazzinghi offers a translation wherein ויתר in v. 9 is read in relation to the particle adverb עוד (here meaning 'also').[17] The implication would be that not only was Qoheleth a normal sage like all the rest, but that he *also* imparted knowledge to the people by teaching them. This would seem to imply that it is a confirmation of his outstanding qualities with regards to wisdom and knowledge, for Qoheleth himself had affirmed at the beginning of the book: "I have gained more wisdom than all

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14 Cf. Mazzinghi (*Ho cercato*, 335) who offers the image of birds in Qoh 10:20 as an example of the non-personal implication of בעלי.

15 Cf. Mazzinghi, *Ho cercato*, 335. Out of a number of options, Luca Mazzinghi cautiously chooses to read דברי with reference to objects, not people, also due to its parallelism to "the words of the wise," hence resulting in "i testi delle (loro) raccolte," that is "the texts of (their) collections."

16 Cf. Fox, "Frame-Narrative," 100–101, where the author speaks of the equivocal tone of the epilogist and his being somewhat non-committal towards Qoheleth's sayings.

17 Mazzinghi, *Ho cercato*, 324: "Oltre a essere un saggio, Qohelet insegnò anche il sapere al popolo..."

who were before me over Jerusalem, and my heart has perceived great wisdom and knowledge" (1:16).[18] Moreover, the LXX phrase καὶ περισσὸν ἐξ αὐτῶν at the end of v. 11 could be taken to be a comparative remark that presents the shepherd (presumably Qoheleth) as being exceedingly more remarkable than the other sages.

The production of many books mentioned in v. 12b is conceptually in antagonism with Qoheleth's activity mentioned in vv. 9–10. There is tension created between the emending of proverbs by Qoheleth and the too many writings produced. Though הרבה ('many') appears in conjunction with Qoheleth and with the several books produced in vv. 9 and 12b (x 2) respectively, in the former case our sage is said to straighten (תקן) many proverbs. The combination of searching (חקר) and weighing (אזן) many parables does not mean that Qoheleth merely wanted to reproduce them. Rather, his emending them or straightening them out implied distilling them in order to draw out what is true and agreeable. His task was not the mass production of writings, but rather, to use the words of the second epilogist, to find the end of the matter (סוף דבר 12:13).

That Qoheleth's opus is presented as being superior to the many books produced by nameless others can be gleaned by comparing or contrasting vv. 9–11 and 12–14, specifically the central verse of each of these sections, namely v. 10 and v. 12. Different nouns are used to identify these works, different verbs are employed to describe their creation, and the quantities implied in each case differ too (see Table 1). In the case of Qoheleth, the masculine singular participle כתוב ('written') is used, implying a single written document.[19] This contrasts with the plural term ספרים ('books'), which is amplified by the adverb הרבה ('many'). Moreover, Qoheleth's activity is denoted by the more refined verb כתב, which must be distinguished from the mere production of books expressed through the ordinary verb עשה ('to make'). In this respect, he resembled Moses (and Joshua) who wrote down the words of the Law.[20]

Table 1: Contrasts between the activity of Qoheleth and the other writers

Term Used	Qoheleth (v. 10)	Other Writers (v. 12)
Noun	כתוב ('written')	ספרים ('books')
Verb	כתב ('write')	עשה ('make')
Quantity	One single entity [כתוב masc. sing.]	הרבה ('many') [ספרים masc. pl.]

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18 The linguistic connections are the following: חכמה (1:16) and חכם (12:9); דעת (1:16;12:9); הרבה (1:16;12:9); יסף (1:16) and עוד (12:9).

19 For 12:10, the translation of NKJV seems ideal: "The Preacher sought to find acceptable words; and *what was* written *was* upright – words of truth."

20 Cf. Exod 24:4; 34:28; Deut 31:9; 31:22; Josh 8:32.

If, as v. 12 claims, there is no end to the writing of many books, Qoheleth's efforts to find acceptable words involved painstakingly sifting through the copious material he had at hand (the numerous proverbs; משלים הרבה v. 9) and succinctly presenting what was truly valid. The arduous nature of this task is expressed in LXX by the adjective πολλά in v. 10, thus rendering: "The Preacher sought *diligently*…" That the reference to "much study" in v. 12 is not meant to reflect an unfavourable judgement on Qoheleth's efforts can be surmised from the congruous statements at the far ends of the book. In 1:8 the sage had already stated that all things are wearisome (יגע), and that despite his outstanding excellence with regard to wisdom and knowledge in 1:16–18, his efforts led to grief and sorrow which, in fact, are the emotional equivalent of the weariness of the body (יגיעה) mentioned in 12:12.[21]

If the final two epilogues were indeed composed by two different redactors, it is clear that the second of these (vv. 13–14) is the one that is concerned with orthodoxy and the tradition of Israel's faith, for it is here that the fear of God and observance of his commands are mentioned. The question is whether or not, with the stroke of a pen, the second redactor here meant to deliver some kind of *coup de grâce* to all that had been said. Worthy of note is the emphasis on Qoheleth's proverbs as words to be listened to, which words are somewhat in contrast with the writings of the other sages. In these two epilogues, the lexeme דבר ('word') appears for a total of four times in three verses, namely vv. 10 (x 2).11.13. In v. 10 we hear of the "words of delight" and "words of truth." Then v. 11, which contains the two important similes, has as its subject the "words of the wise." Finally, v. 13 presents the last word (סוף דבר), that is "the end of the matter." Contrasting these occurrences with v. 12b, which refers to books and study in a somewhat unfavourable light, it becomes clear that this verse utilises semantically related but yet different lexemes, rendering דבר conspicuously absent, as though it were intentionally left out. Hence, to claim that the last epilogue overturns the first is, partly, to misunderstand the role of דבר in the text.[22] The expression סוף דבר ("the end of the matter") does not have adversative overtones. Rather, both linguistically and canonically, it is meant to serve as a real conclusion, wrapping up the previous arguments or asseverations. Fearing God and obeying his commandments turns out to be, quintessentially, what Qoheleth had been implying throughout the book. The short and long of it is that it is the other writers' works, and not the fear of God and the observance of his commandments, that are being subtly contrasted to Qoheleth's own writing.

Qoheleth's observations about the whole of reality that he presented by way of inductive logic, employing lexemes such as כל ('all') and זה ('this'), are meant to show that human beings are fated to endure certain experiences in life (e.g. 2:10.19.23; 3:19; 4:4.8.16; 5:18; 6:2; 7:18.23; 8:9; 9:1.3), though free will is not dispensed with.

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21   The term יגע appears only in 1:8 and 10:15, whilst יגיעה is found only in 12:12.
22   The book of Qoheleth in fact opens with a reference to the sage's words (דברי קהלת).

In similar fashion, the penultimate verse of the book is a statement that must be read as a summing up of all of Qoheleth's affirmations. It is not a question of fearing God and obeying his commandments *over and against* what had just been heard (נשמע 12:13a), but *in agreement with* what was heard. The statement כי־זה כל־האדם ("for this is the whole [duty] of man") in v. 13b, employing כל and זה once again, affirms that one's submission to God's dictates as clearly outlined in the book has to do directly with the fear of God and the obedience of his commandments.

3. A Nuance of Torah in the Similes Employed

It is opportune to turn to v. 11 and to focus on the similes found therein. What follows is not an indisputable case for the association of these similes to the notion of the Torah. Rather, my intention is to delve into the conceptual spaces created by these marked metaphors and to consider their subsequent implications for reading these final verses in relation to Torah.

Goads

The word דרבן, 'goad,' appears in 12:11 and only once more in the MT, namely in 1 Sam 13:21. Here, it is predicated of the Hiphil verb נצב, which means 'to cause to stand.' The LXX ὑπόστασις signifies the essence of something, hence the translation 'to straighten' is fitting. In 1 Sam 13, the goads are used as implements of war that were sharpened by the Philistines. Another word for דרבן is מלמד ('ox-goad'), which appears only in Judg 3:31 and which is used by Shamgar son of Anath to save Israel from the Philistines.[23] In Qoh 12:11, the possible use of the goad in warfare is completely missing. Interestingly, the Ancient Near East offers a number of images of the ox-goad as can be seen, for instance, in Sennacherib's Lachish reliefs.[24]

In the case of oxen, the use of a goad would denote the cattle-driver's resolve to force the cattle to plough the field. It is indeed highly unlikely that by goads the author meant to elicit its function in inducing work, for throughout the book, Qoheleth attributed to it a very relative value. Work is beneficial only insofar as it provides one with the means to have pleasure.[25] The outlook is in line with the rest of the book which does not have a particularly positive stance vis-à-vis work (cf. Qoh 2:17; 2:23; in 3:22 too, work is seen as a matter of fate which one should best enjoy as though to

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[23] LXX translates this using the lexeme ἀροτρόπους which actually means 'ploughshare.'
[24] For details about these reliefs and other occurrences of the cattle prod in the Ancient Near East and Egypt, see Way, "Minor Judges," 278, n. 17.
[25] Onwukeme, *The Concept of* Hebel, 75: "The negative meaning of *ʿāmal* in the other parts of the Hebrew Bible is carried over into his work… When Qoheleth affirms the value of *ʿāmal* as a source of benefit, what is being praised is toil's product…"

overcome the drudgery of life). The connotation of work is missing here since sheep, which are implied by the presence of the shepherd mentioned, do not perform that kind of activity. Given the above, the main conceptual blend that the metaphors of goad and shepherd produce has to do with the activity of giving direction, rather than that of forcing some kind of labour.

Gerhard von Rad sees the image of the ox-goad in Qoh 12:11 as a sign of "the effectiveness of the wise men's words."[26] Effectiveness is, certainly, associated with this agricultural instrument which is used to spur on cattle whilst ploughing. However, this effectiveness is not merely derived from the image of coaxing a beast, but particularly from the usefulness of the goad in giving direction. This notion can be visualised in the prophetic text of Isa 30:21: "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, «This is the way; walk in it»." The use of a goad to direct sheep is particularly interesting since an overarching meaning of the term תורה is 'direction' (or 'instruction'), being derived from the verb ירה which is used for the shooting (directing) of arrows.[27] Qoheleth's role of teaching (למד) the people in v. 9 complements this notion.[28]

Victor Onwukeme points out that the pericope that opens with 4:17 and concludes at 5:6 has positive imperatives at its far ends.[29] The first one is a directive to watch one's steps (literally one's *foot*; רגל 4:17), whilst the second imperative is identical to the one in 12:13, namely "Fear God" (את־האלהים ירא 5:6). This shows that the imperatives in 12:13 are in agreement with the rest of the book, and that before 12:11, where the goad is mentioned, setting one's foot aright was already enjoined in relation to God's majesty. This is conducive to attributing to the goad a meaning that is way beyond the mere agricultural sphere. Suffice it to say that Ps 32:8–9 offers a subtle comparison of God's people to animals that need to be guided "by bit and bridle" if they are to come to you. This is said in the context of the instruction and teaching (אשכילך ואורך Ps 32:8) that God was willing to offer to his people (also see Isa 1:3). The link between Torah and guidance, even by resorting to animal imagery, is blatant.

The Bible offers the opposite image to being led by God. Though not a frequent theme, this image is indeed significant. In the context of the Exile, the author of Lamentations makes the following complaint: "He has blocked my ways with hewn stone; he has made my paths crooked." (Lam 3:9). Reading this text in the light of Hosea 2:8, where God warns that he would block Israel's path with thornbushes,

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26   von Rad, *Wisdom*, 21.

27   The cultic connotation of the term can be seen in Mic 3:11 where the priests are accused of "teaching (יורו) for a price."

28   Sirach 38:25 speaks of "the shaft of the goad" (δόρατι κέντρου). Here, the goad is related to the lack of knowledge of the one using it, which is the very opposite of what one finds in Qoh 12. This fact points to the versatility of the image in question.

29   Cf. Onwukeme, *The Concept of* Hebel, 336.

Gerlinde Baumann suggests that the hewn stones of Lamentations are actually those of the Temple which now bring Israel to a standstill.[30] The inability to move forward is a sign of punishment. On the other hand, Hosea 4:16 presents Israel as a balking cow that would not be pastured by the Lord. Here, therefore, the immobility or paralysis results from its own stubbornness which, in Hebrew, has overtones of the notion of straying.[31] Concerning such deviant behaviour, Pierre Van Hecke states: "… Israel is compared to a straying cow here. Israel is thus described as a cow unwilling to follow the track its driver wants it to go, be it to plough, or to pull loads." Conversely, Prov 13:14 states: "The *law of the wise person* (תורת חכם) is a fountain of life, *to turn away* (לסור) from the snares of death." Here, turning away implies finding the right path, which is essentially what Torah is all about.

Nails

Though משמרה ('nail' or 'peg') in 12:11 is a hapax, it pertains to a semantic field of some form of construction or other that helps the reader to pin it down to a very specific use. Conceptually, the nail/peg corresponds to the foundations of a house, as it is the only part of the structure that reaches down beneath the surface and remains lodged, partly, in the ground. In a recent article, Kenneth C. Way pointed out the following: "Unconventional weapons are noted frequently in the book of Judges (Ehud's custom dagger, Jael's tent peg, a woman's upper millstone, and Samson's donkey jawbone), most likely to emphasize that YHWH's victories are not dependent on state-of-the-art weaponry or technology (cf. Josh 6; 1 Sam 13:19–14:23; 17:45–47; etc.)."[32] However, as is the case with the goad, Qoh 12 is completely void of any bellicose imagination even with regards to the nails mentioned.

A related lexeme is יתד ('tent peg'), which refers to the pitching of a tent by Jacob in Gen 31:25, and in Exodus and Numbers is used in conjunction with the court and the tabernacle. In Judg 4:21.22 and 5:26 it is the implement with which Jael kills Sisera. The verb used in 4:21 is תקע ('to thrust'; πήγνυμι, 'to make firm'), which verb also appears together with יתד in Isa 22:23 where God says of Eliakim son of Hilkiah: "I shall drive him like a nail into a firm place; and he will become a throne of glory for his family." An ominous future is then foretold in v. 25, where this peg is seen giving way, falling, and causing all that was hanging on it to fall. Given the context, such a tragedy implies the loss of Eliakim's family's glory. In Jer 6:3 too, תקע denotes thrusting rather than planting, specifically the driving in of tent pegs in order to pitch tents. However, it is curious that this verse makes reference to the activity of every *single* shepherd within a context of discipline and judgement meted out to Daughter Zion

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30   Cf. Baumann, "Quadersteinen," 142–143.
31   Cf. Van Hecke, "Conceptual Blending," 223–225, where the link between סרר ('to be stubborn') and סור ('to stray') is highlighted.
32   Way, "Minor Judges," 278.

for not having heeded the word of the Lord. Clearly, the image presented in Jeremiah is the counterpart of what is being said in Qoheleth, where the one shepherd's activity is in favour of the people who are willing to listen to the nail-like words of the wise.

Though semantically related, תקע is different to the verb employed in Qoh 12:11, namely נטע ('to plant'). Unlike the word for 'goads' which remains unqualified, the 'nails' mentioned are qualified with this verb. What is in view is clearly the nails' function to give stability to a structure. Among other things, nails imply shelter and rest, firmness and security.[33] Though the notion of the nail/peg has even been taken to denote limits that cannot be surpassed, it would seem more precise to associate them with stability in and possession of the land.[34] In fact, the verb נטע has strong overtones of God's intention to plant his people on his holy mountain in the Promised Land (see Ps 80:9.16; Amos 9:15) and the implication that they would therefore abound in life. A contrasting scenario is presented in Ps 52:7 where the wicked man is told that God would snatch him from his tent and uproot him from the land of the living.

The whole covenantal theology of the Hebrew Bible is based on the axiom that obedience to the commandments will secure establishment. This is expressed in negative terms when Samuel tells Saul that his kingdom would have been established (כון Hiphil 'to fix') had he obeyed God's command.[35] Conversely, personified wisdom states the following in the sapiential text of Sirach 24:8: "Then the Creator of all things instructed me and he who created me *fixed a place* (καταπαύω, 'to cause to rest') for my tent. He said, «*Pitch your tent* (κατασκηνόω, 'to cause to dwell') in Jacob, make Israel your inheritance»." Though the reference to tent pegs is missing, their function in relation to the important task of pitching a tent cannot be missed.

Nails like the one found at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, dating from the end of the 3rd millennium, are interesting archaeological artefacts because they were inscribed and driven into temple walls as a sign of the deity's ownership of the building (see Figure 1).[36] Hence, they had to do with a deity's very identity and with their claims to certain possessions. Such a usage would have contributed to loading the concept of a nail with meaning that was not limited to a mere architectural function. Without ascribing any particular influence of such nails to the text under investigation, one can hold that the propensity of such a small object to create a conceptual

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[33] Though the word Torah is taken to be derived from Hiphil ירה, 'to teach', it is worth noting that Job 38:6 uses the verb with the meaning of laying (a cornerstone). That Torah is a cornerstone in the life of the believing community is self evident.

[34] See Mazzinghi (*Ho cercato*, 335) who comments on the position of certain scholars in this regard. The study of Benjamin A. Saidel ("Pitching Camp," 92) shows that tents are at times linked to adjacent durable structures, giving the impression that the tents may have stood for a very long time. See Figure 13.4 – Progression from tent site to village, in Whitcomb, "Pastoral Pleasantry," 251, which provides evidence of a tent site gradually becoming a town.

[35] Also see 2 Sam 7:24.26 (with reference to בית, the house of David).

[36] Image courtesy of Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

blend through the merging of the spaces of the source domain and the target domain, namely the nails and words respectively, makes it an apt metaphorical figure. It is, therefore, not surprising that the epilogist would have found it a useful metaphor to convey specific concepts about the huge import of sages' words.[37]

Figure 1: King Ur-Nammu clay nail (2113–2096 BCE), Ur, Iraq

Goads and Nails

Both goads and nails are pointed objects, one used with living creatures, the other with inanimate objects. Fox views these instruments as bearing a negative nuance, given that they both prick, but their meaning in Qoheleth is clearly positive.[38] It is striking that these two images are made to complement each other, for a goad and a nail may be physically similar but, in practice, they function somewhat

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37 One suspects that in v. 11 the very use of בעל, which generally means lord, may be related to this.
38 Cf. Fox, "Frame-Narrative," 102. Craig Bartholomew (*Reading Ecclesiastes*, 163–164) has serious reservations on Fox's interpretation of these instruments as being painful and dangerous. Weeks ("Fear God," 116) relates the "nails in a stick" of v. 11 to the discomfort that is provoked by the preceding monologue of the sage. In this case, as in Fox's interpretation, the image furnished is that the nail is attached to the end of the goad to make it effective. Weeks (*Ecclesiastes 5–12*, 662) retains the same view; with reference to goads, he claims that such wisdom literature is "painful by design."

contrastingly vis-à-vis movement or stability. Lohfink rightly points out the opposite effects of these two instruments, one driving forward, the other holding down. He suggests that these metaphors reflect the progressive and conservative natures of the teachings of the wise.[39]

The goad and peg have, as underlying imagery, the notions of travelling along the road (דרך) and being established in the land (ארץ). Both these notions are foundational with regards to the way Torah is presented in Deuteronomy, for instance Deut 30:16–18 where the people are admonished to walk in God's ways (ללכת בדרכיו) and keep his commands (לשמר מצותיו) lest they perish and no longer live in the land which they were about to possess (ארץ... לרשתה). The terms דרך and מצוה or other ones belonging in the same semantic field appear together in Deut 8:2.6; 11:22.28; 19:9; 26:17; 28:9; 30:16; Josh 22:5; Judg 2:17; 1 Kgs 2:3; 3:14; 8:58; 11:38; 2 Kgs 17:13 (the people's wicked ways are mentioned here); Prov 6:23; 19:16; LXX Prov 13:13; also see Ps 25:4–13 (for discourse on God's ways, the fact that he guides people in his ways, and the possession of the land as a result thereof); 27:11; 44:18–19 (on the covenant and God's path); 119:9.15.32.101.104.128.168; Isa 2:3; Mic 4:2. In the Deuterocanonicals we find the combination of 'commandment' (ἐντολή) and 'road' (ὁδός) in Tob 4:5.19 and Bar 4:12–13 (Law [νόμος], ways of the commandments [ὁδοῖς ἐντολῶν θεοῦ] and "the paths of discipline" [τρίβους παιδείας]). In some of the texts above, the verb דבק appears, referring to a cleaving to the Torah, which attitude may be inferred by the notion of the peg planted. Of particular interest are Ps 119:31–32, two verses in this Torah psalm which combine the notion of stability and movement in line with the imagery of the peg and the goad respectively:

> I hold fast to your statutes, Lord; do not let me be put to shame.
> I run in the path of your commands, for you have broadened my understanding.
>
> (Ps 119:31–32)

Walking in God's ways and keeping his commandments are not merely human activities that have to do with a man or woman's ability to stick to the path traced out by the Lord. God's active role in keeping the righteous on the right path is what the sage refers to when he says: "He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of his faithful ones." (Prov 2:8) More significant in relation to the Torah is Exodus 15:16–17 where Moses sings of the people who pass over (עבר) and who God brings (בוא) and plants (נטע) on the mountain of his inheritance.

In v. 9 we are told that Qoheleth "searched out" (בקש) and "made straight," or "set in order" (Piel תקן) a number of proverbs. The use of Piel תקן in 7:13, where it is stated that no one can straighten what God has made crooked, suggests that the sage's straightening out of proverbs, or rather his setting them in order, is not

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39   Cf. Lohfink, *Qoheleth*, 143; Mazzinghi (*Ho cercato*, 337) holds the same view.

contrary to what God has ordained but, rather, is in line with it). The same applies to v. 10, which states that Qoheleth "searched to find" (בקש קהלת למצא)... "and wrote" (כתוב). Whether intentional or not, these aspects of active searching and meticulous writing bring to mind the spurring on and the fixing effect of goads and nails respectively.

Given by One Shepherd

The shift from discourse on "the wise" (plural חכמים) to the singular shepherd (participle masculine singular רעה) suggests that there is some distinction between the two, for there is no reason to suddenly refer to all the wise collectively as though they formed one single entity. The one shepherd who has given these wise words could be taken to be the Teacher himself, who had imposed upon himself the task of collecting the sayings of the wise. However, despite the fact that the Teacher was king in Jerusalem (cf. 1:1.12) – and kings were shepherds of the people[40] – the circles of shepherds and of sages do not overlap. It would seem awkward to suddenly depict Qoheleth as a shepherd, rather than a king or wise man. The resulting ambiguity may be a case of double entendre. Though the shepherd may refer to Qoheleth himself, the use of this unexpected metaphor at this stage in the book may suggest that the target of the metaphor implied by this linguistic vehicle has divine overtones. Several scholars have, indeed, suggested that this one shepherd refers to God.[41] It is intriguing that Ezek 37:24 refers to king David as the "one shepherd" the people would have, and associates this with God's Torah, specifically the משפטים and חקת: "David my servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have *one shepherd* [רועה אחד]; they shall also walk in my judgments and observe my statutes, and do them."

Othmar Keel affirms that, among others, Qoheleth is opposed to the idea that God could be depicted with some human image, such as father, king, or shepherd.[42] Nonetheless, he admits of some form of representation without which it would be impossible to envisage God. Qoh 12:11 could, therefore, constitute only a subtle reference to God that precludes a too mundane reference to the Lord.[43] Despite the epilogist's possible reluctance to present God in shepherd's garb, the very notion of the "one shepherd" easily evokes the concept of God as shepherding his people through the wilderness and establishing them in the Land.

More light can be thrown on this impasse when it is noted that, in Qoheleth, the verb נתן occurs often in conjunction with the divine appellation Elohim as its

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40 Kingship is associated with shepherding in, for instance, 2 Sam 5:2; Ezek 37:24.
41 Cf. Mazzinghi, *Ho cercato*, 339, on the identity of God and the aspects of inspiration and canonicity. Fox ("Frame-Narrative," 102) is opposed to this idea.
42 Cf. Keel, *Symbolism*, 178.
43 Mazzinghi (*Ho cercato*, 338) speaks of the possible eschatological and messianic overtones of this pastoral metaphor, but cautions us against being too certain about its interpretation, since emphasizing such overtones would relativize the importance of Qoheleth as presented in the first epilogue.

subject (1:13; 2:26; 3:10.11; 5:17.18; 6:2; 8:15; 12:7). From beginning to end, the book is pervaded with a conviction that God is the one who ordains reality the way it is, giving life to human beings as well as the conditions by which they are to live. This is enforced by the phrase אשר־נתן־לו האלהים ("which God has given him") that becomes like a refrain spanning chapters 5–8 (cf. 5:17.18; 6:2; 8:15). It has been noted that one of the meanings of the word δίδωμι, 'to give' (see v. 11), is: "what is given by a person in superior position to one in subordinate position," which may indeed capture the social context in which this transaction is presented.[44] This, coupled with the notion of the "one shepherd," suggests that reading the shepherd image as a metaphor for God may indeed be viable.

Moreover, the verb נתן should not be seen as being related purely to the nouns 'the words of the wise' and 'the words of collections.' Given the fact that this verb is qualified by a metaphorical subject, namely the figure of the shepherd, the verb נתן must be taken to pertain to the metaphorical images furnished by the verse. On closer analysis, if it is being claimed that the shepherd is *giving* both goad and nail, one wonders what this statement really means. If anything, the shepherd would *use* these instruments, rather than *give* them. If נתן is imbued with divine connotations, by default the images of the goad and nails must be seen as being of divine origin. Their association with Torah thus becomes more firmly established. The link with עם ('people') in v. 9 at the beginning of the pericope becomes imperative, and the above considerations lead to seeing this עם as none other than God's people.[45] According to Maharsha the term "shepherd" is used with reference to God and to Moses, hence these words are those spoken by Moses as God gave them to him.[46] Such an interpretation fits in with the Jewish belief that the ultimate source of the entire Tanakh was the Sinai event. In this case, it might be plausible to read בעלי אספות as "lords of the gatherings," with reference to the "Men of the Great Assembly" who were traditionally believed to have received the revelation given to Moses from his successors, the Prophets. Such a reading would therefore signify the attribution of a canonical status to this book.[47]

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44 Cf. input on δίδωμι in Friberg – Friberg – Miller, *Analytical Lexicon*.
45 Leo G. Perdue ("Sages, Scribes, and Seers," 8, n. 10) concludes that the book and the epilogue lead us to see this term as referring to a group of students who were learning at a school where Qoheleth worked.
46 Maharsha is a Hebrew acronym that refers to Rabbi Shmuel Eidels; cf. Zlotowitz, *Koheles*, 201.
47 Speaking of Job 28, Maurice Gilbert ("Giobbe 28 e la sapienza," 226–227) makes the following assertion regarding wisdom and inspiration: "Gb 28,28 attribuisce dunque a Dio sentenze di saggi antichi e recenti. Dietro questo procedimento, c'è la convinzione di quello che ha scritto quest'ultimo versetto del capitolo che le parole dei maestri di saggezza sono parole di Dio, cioè che le loro parole sono ispirate da lui."

4. Related Biblical Imagery and Rabbinic Analysis

The epilogist's comment about the "words of delight" and "words of truth" are to be seen in the light of the epilogist's likely understanding of the Scriptures in these terms. Various texts from the Hebrew Bible lend their support to giving these terms, particularly that of truth, a certain gravitas that is not related merely to the secular world of wisdom. To begin with, the prophetic injunction in Jer 6:10 concerning the people's refusal to find delight in God's words (דבר־יהוה... לֹא יחפצו־בו) bolster the idea that the sage's words complement prophetic teaching given within the context of a covenant relationship. Moreover, Qoheleth also sought to write acceptable words (דברי אמת 12:10). It must be recalled that God's words are true (2 Sam 7:28), he spoke from heaven and gave laws of truth (ודבר... תורות אמת Neh 9:13), his word on Elijah's lips is true (1 Kgs 17:24), and he demands that his word be spoken faithfully (ידבר דברי אמת Jer 23:28).

As for the Psalter, the words of the messianic king in Ps 45 are words of truth (cf. v.5), and the Torah Ps 119 relates God's ordinances or laws to a word of truth (דבר־אמת vv. 43 and 160). Together with the Pentateuch, Isaiah and the Minor Prophets, the Book of Psalms formed the first canon, all these works bearing similarities as to the process of their literary formation.[48] So it is curious that the expression דברי אמת (words of truth) in Qoh 12:10 occur most often in the Psalms. I will turn again to the relationship between Qoheleth, the Pentateuch and the Minor Prophets shortly. As for the Writings, Proverbs is the one that most resembles the books of the first canon in terms of their evolutionary process. In the entire MT, the word אמת appears most often in the Psalms (x 37), and is then followed by 12 occurrences in Isaiah and 12 others in Proverbs, 7 of which are found within what is considered to be the oldest substratum of Proverbs.[49] The link between the words of truth mentioned in Qoh 12 and the concept of divine truth in these most ancient Scriptures is undeniable.

In apocalyptic literature, Daniel is presented as having received a true message (אמת הדבר) concerning a writing of truth (cf. 10:1.21). Of particular interest is the end of Esther, where Mordecai sends letters with words of peace and truth (דברי שלום ואמת Esth 9:30). This is noteworthy because, from the point of view of the formation of the Tanakh, this text speaks about the establishment of the tradition of celebrating Purim, hence such a celebration would have imbued this text with a degree of canonicity. In like manner, the reference to Qoheleth writing "words of truth" (דברי אמת Qoh 12:10) – which reference was clearly not written by the author of the book – occurring in the epilogue can be viewed as a redactional move to render the book worthy of canonical status.

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48   Cf. Trebolle Barrera, "Origins," 133–134, 138, 145.
49   Namely Prov 10:1–22:16 and 25–29. Proverbs and Job formed the earliest kernel of the Writings (since the Psalms was initially an appendix to the Law and the Prophets); cf. Trebolle Barrera, "Origins," 136, 143, 145.

Before turning my attention to rabbinic literature, I would like to make one final remark about Qoheleth in relation to the Pentateuch and the Major and Minor Prophets. Our text presents this sage as having written (כתב Qoh 12:10) important words. Deuteronomy and Malachi are the last two books of Torah and Nevi'im respectively. The end of Deuteronomy presents Moses as writing the words of the law which were meant to be read in a liturgical context related to a pilgrimage (Deut 31:9–13). The purpose of this act of reading was to instil the fear of the Lord that would lead to obedience to the word (vv. 12–13). The role of reading was assigned to the Levitical priests and the elders of Israel. As for Malachi, Levi is presented as an example when it comes to pronouncing words of truth and knowledge in accordance with Torah, though the priests did not follow suit (Mal 2:4–9). The uprightness and law of truth which people sought from his mouth (מישור, תורת אמת v. 6) are reminiscent of the upright and true words (ישר דברי אמת 12:10) he sought to write.[50] As for the group of prophets preceding the Twelve, namely Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, not far from the end of Ezekiel is yet another text that speaks about Ezekiel being commissioned to write about the temple in order for the people to observe the ordinances laid down (Ezek 43:11). All of this shows that there is a connection between writing or imparting Law-based knowledge and the expected attitude of having the fear of the Lord that leads to obedience at the end of conceptually distinct sections of the Hebrew Bible, namely Deuteronomy, Ezekiel and Malachi. Though Qoheleth does not enjoy the pride of place of a concluding section, the combination of upright and truthful words, the fear of the Lord and obedience to his commandments in its final chapter bears a surprising similarity to the end of the previous "sections" and suggests that the same logic is at play.[51]

A brief look at some rabbinic texts is in order to help us understand some aspects of the reception history of Qoh 12:11. Midrash Rabba to Numbers points out that *kaddarbonoth* should be read *kidd'rabbanuth*, meaning "like a command of authority."[52] Such an interpretation ignores the marked metaphor of a goad employed here (which is a fitting simile for the words of the wise), as well as the playful assonance created by the syllable ות (x 3) mentioned earlier. However, such an emendation is interesting as the rabbis clearly attributed the gravitas of moral authority to the words of the wise. Rashi does not dispense with the term 'goad' and sees in it the

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[50] The act of writing is subsequently mentioned in Mal 3:16 in relation to those who feared the Lord. However, the context is clearly different. Cf. Oliver Dyma, "'Remember the Torah of Moses, My Servant': Torah in the Twelve," paper presented at the 2019 EABS conference in Warsaw for the connection between Deuteronomy and Malachi in this regard.

[51] In relation to what comes at the beginning of a composition, Egbert Ballhorn (*Zum Telos des Psalters*, 27) states: "Was... am Ende steht, hat ein noch größeres Gewicht. Wer das letzte Wort hat, dominiert die Gesamtaussage."

[52] Num. R. s. 14; Marcus Jastrow (*Dictionary*, 612a) makes this reference to B'midbar Rabbah.

instrument by which a heifer is directed to its furrows, comparing this to a person who by the sages' words finds the path of life.[53]

The aforementioned Midrash Rabba to Numbers (Num. R. s. 14) also emends the term כמשמרות to כמס מרות, meaning "as the juice of bitter things." Given the reference to authority for the *kidd'rabbanuth* mentioned above, this emendation cannot imply a negative view of the sages' words. Rather, it probably emphasizes the difficulty one may face in adhering to them.[54] Another emendation of the word for pegs or nails comes from Midrash Tanḥuma which rejects the term *k'mishm'roth* ("like guards") in favour of "*k'masm'roth* ("like nails") to teach thee, if though drivest them like a nail into thy heart, they will guard thee."[55] In both interpretations, the notion of guarding cannot be missed, and hence, a connection with the keeping (שמר) of God's commands in v. 13 is elicited. On the other hand, Rashi and Metzudas David emphasize the aspect of permanence that a well-fastened nail gives.[56] Driving a nail into a place also has connotations of ownership, as suggested by Jastrow in a comment on the Midrash Rabbah to Leviticus.[57] Such connotations may also be gleaned from the verb 'to plant.' In fact, with reference to Qoh 12:11, Midrash Rabbah to Numbers s. 14 states that "as roots of a tree spread in all directions, so the words of the Law enter and penetrate the whole body."[58] One final interpretation that might be worth mentioning is given with reference to tractate Ḥăgigah 3b in the Talmud: "as the nail (driven in) creates a hole and not an addition, so do the words of the Law &c."[59] Though it is not clear what this hole refers to, it might reflect an opening of the heart or its piercing which would allow the Law of God to enter into it.

Conclusion

Whilst the first epilogue portrays Qoheleth in a positive light, the second one may seem to play down the sage's musings, turning the reader's focus away from the book's main content and squarely onto the importance of divine teachings. This, however, is an incorrect reading of the book at large and the epilogues alike. Holding that

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53 Cf. Zlotowitz, *Koheles*, 200.
54 One must note that, with reference to 12:10, Num. R. s. 14 states that "when they (the words of the Law) come out disfigured, they are bitter (drops) to those who hear them"; cf. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 808b.
55 Tanḥ. B'haăl. 15; cf. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 809a.
56 Cf. Zlotowitz, *Koheles*, 201. Metzudat David is the work of David Altschuler which was completed by his son Yechiel Hillel Altschuler.
57 Cf. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1311a on Lev. R. s. 5.
58 Cf. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1635a.
59 Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 490.

the commandments mentioned are placed over and against the sage's reflections misses the mark on several counts:

1. Qoheleth is said to have taught the people, the verb employed, למד, being usually associated with positive teaching.[60]

2. The appropriateness of the sage's teachings is further confirmed by the description of his words as being upright and truthful (v. 10), which strongly echo divine words found in other parts of the Hebrew Bible.

3. The reference to "one shepherd," despite it being somewhat obscure, bears a strong nuance of the divine shepherd particularly in relation to the verb נתן ('to give') which, in the context of the entire book, takes on overtones suggesting the ultimate divine provenance of the proverbs collected.

4. Finally, despite the seeming antagonism that is created between the two epilogues, the second one does not contradict nor negate the words of the wise, even less so the words of Qoheleth. Rather, it offers the quintessential substance of the matter. And it is never claimed that, by default, fearing God and obeying his commandments gives meaning to the seemingly confounding and disorienting realities that can be observed under the sun.

The employment of the marked metaphor of goads and nails plays on the power these small instruments have to evoke the imagination as regards the relationship of the sages' words to Torah. But this is possible because of the rich theology they latch themselves onto, particularly in terms of Torah's relationship to the path traced out by God and to the stability that its observance secures. In the light of the goads or pegs analysed, it is hoped that this contribution will spur on the reader to drive the nail of sapiential knowledge further down into the Torah matrix.

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60   Some salient examples are Deut 41:1; 6:1; 31:22; 2 Sam 1:17–18; Ezra 7:10; Ps 51:15; 119:12; Isa 48:17; 50:4 (למוד).

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Verbum Vitae

The Mystery of the Nativity according to *Liber de divinis officiis* by Rupert of Deutz OSB

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Abstract: The theological interpretation of liturgical texts and gestures presented by representatives of the German monastic school played an important role in the liturgy of the medieval era. Among its most important representatives was Rupert of Deutz OSB, who presented his views in *Liber de divinis officiis*. This article aims to show what the uniqueness of the Incarnation of the Son of God consists in according to Rupert of Deutz's views, based on the example of the celebration of the Nativity. Particularly significant is his interpretation of Old Testament texts and images, and his reference of the Incarnation to the first day of creation. He presented his views not only based on liturgical customs but also according to the principles of medieval computistics.

Keywords: medieval liturgy, Nativity, history of the liturgy, salvation, allegory, theological monastic school

At the heart of the celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation is the liturgical Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord. It was first mentioned in the Chronograph of 354, which is the oldest and fundamental document on the celebration of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.[1] Although the commemoration of this event is based on the fact of Jesus' birth — a part of the world's history — according to the oldest liturgical references, it was not so much the moment of his earthly birth that was commemorated as the presence of the Lord and Saviour who became man to achieve salvation.[2]

Theological reflection, which has been present since the time of the Church Fathers, has a crucial place in learning the meaning of the Lord's Incarnation. It was particularly such authors as St. Zeno of Verona (d. 371), St. Ambrose (d. 397), St. Maximus of Turin (d. ca. 408–423), St. Jerome (d. 420), and St. Augustine (d. 430) that linked this event mainly with the prophet Malachi, who proclaimed that the sun of righteousness would rise for those who worshipped the name of the Lord (cf. Mal 3:20), and interpreted in a way that contradicted the pagan festival of the birth of the invincible sun (*Dies Natalis Solis Invicti*).[3] Patristic reflection soon drew attention to the connection between the birth of Jesus and salvation. Although St. Augustine calls

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1   Cf. Righetti, *L'anno Liturgico*, 66.
2   Cf. Berger, "Ostern und Weihnachten," 7–9.
3   Cf. Righetti, *L'anno Liturgico*, 67.

the celebration of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem a mere commemoration and contrasts it with the true mystery (*Sacramentum*) that is the celebration of Easter, Pope St. Leo the Great (d. 461) refers to the Nativity as a *Sacramentum* that is in close union with the mystery of Easter.[4]

The Middle Ages saw a deeper reflection on the unity of the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption, with a vital role played by Rupert of Deutz OSB (d. 1129/30). He is the main representative of the medieval monastic-theological school in Germany. His views were strongly influenced by the theological thought of the canon regular Gerhoh of Reichersberg (d. 1169) and Honorius of Autun (d. 1150).[5] The former was particularly skilled in historical-philosophical criticism of source texts,[6] whereas the latter co-developed the scholastic method.[7] Drawing on the experience of other theologians, Rupert of Deutz left an enormous written legacy in the form of biblical commentaries and theological treatises and went down among his theological contemporaries as a biblical scholar who claimed that theological knowledge could consist solely in the correct reading of the Bible. Therefore, he read sacramental theology and Christology — especially the Incarnation and liturgy — according to this belief.[8]

This study aims to present how Rupert of Deutz showed the uniqueness of the mystery of the Incarnation, using the example of the liturgical texts on the feast of the Nativity and the symbolism that accompanies it. The starting point for a theological reflection on the celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation is the biblical and liturgical texts read on Christmas Eve, as well as on Nativity Day itself. Therefore, to show the particular uniqueness of Rupert of Deutz's interpretation of the Incarnation, it is necessary to analyze the sources, especially the biblical and liturgical texts found in the oldest liturgical books. Although his writings on the interpretation of Scripture, especially the Song of Songs,[9] are well known, few authors have elaborated on his interpretation of the liturgy. One aspect of his liturgical interpretation concerning the mystery of the Incarnation will therefore be shown based on the source texts.

1. The Vigil on the Night of Jesus' Birth as Contemplation of Divinity

Liturgical texts chosen for a given liturgical day are meant to show this day's depth and theological meaning and are the foundation of theological reflection. The oldest liturgical texts for Nativity Day can be found in the Verona Sacramentary, which

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4   Cf. Auf der Maur, *Feiern im Rhythmus der Zeit*, 169.
5   Cf. Beinert, "Rupert von Deutz," 1107.
6   Cf. Tyrawa, "Gerhoh z Reicherbergu," 1000.
7   Cf. Zahajkiewicz, "Honoriusz z Autun," 1215.
8   Cf. d'Onofrio, *Historia teologii*, 237–238.
9   Cf. Beinert, "Rupert von Deutz," 1107.

also has several Mass formularies for this day included at its end.[10] As early as the sixth century, the papal liturgy introduced a custom of celebrating three Masses on the feast day itself: at midnight, at dawn, and during the day; this custom was already mentioned in the Würzburg Lectionary and in the Gregorian Sacramentary of Hadrian.[11] Since the era of the Old Gelasian Sacramentary, the custom of celebrating three Masses, as present in the papal liturgy, has been transferred to the liturgy of presbyters.[12] Although tradition has it that the custom of celebrating two Masses on Christmas Day and one at night was introduced by Pope Telesphorus (125–136), there is no confirmation of this in historical sources.[13]

The first liturgical texts pertaining to the mystery of the Nativity are read on the Eve of the Nativity Day itself. According to Rupert, the promise of God's consolation is clearly announced on this day: "Today you will know that the Lord will come, and he will save us, and in the morning you will see his glory" (cf. Exod 16:6.7) and "[...] stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (cf. 2 Chr 20:17).[14] The biblical context of this encouragement is crucial: during Jehoshaphat's reign, the Ammonites, Moabites, and inhabitants of Mt. Seir rose up against Judah. Then, when the people of Judah held a prayer, the spirit of the Lord rested on Jahaziel, who assured that God himself would fight against the rebels and he would prevail.[15] As such, the words: "[...] stand firm [...] Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you." (2 Chr 20:17) are, in Rupert's eyes, an indication that the birth of the Son of God is salvation for mankind just like the deliverance in the time of Jehoshaphat.[16] At the same time, the Ammonites, Moabites, and inhabitants of Mt. Seir appear in the Bible as synonymous with evil and sin (cf. Jer 48; Ezek 35).[17] Thus, their image became an allegory of the sins and vices that contributed to the fall of man and thus to the beginning of the realization of salvation.

Watching for the coming of the Lord is the centerpiece of the Eve of the Nativity, and to demonstrate its significance, Rupert points to Old Testament events and links them with the Incarnation. He relates the *introit* of the Mass to Old Testament events: "Today you will know that the Lord will come, and he will save us, and in the morning you will see his glory" (cf. Exod 16:6–7). This passage is present even

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10   Cf. *Sacramentarium Veronense*, 157–163.
11   Cf. *Le Sacramentaire Grégorien*, 99–104.
12   Cf. *Liber Sacramentorum*, 7–10.
13   Cf. *Księga Pontyfików 1–96*, 23*.
14   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 68).
15   Cf. Tronina, *Druga Księga Kronik*, 238–239.
16   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 68).
17   Cf. Ruiz, "Księga Ezechiela," 972.

in the oldest surviving Mass antiphonaries.[18] Its origin dates back to the Israelites' wanderings through the desert when God promised to rain down manna — bread from heaven. In this way, Rupert showed the connection between this *introit* passage and the Eucharist: "bread from heaven" (cf. Ps 78[77]:24). He thus shows the reciprocal relationship between the manna and the Word of God who took flesh from the Virgin Mary. After the coming of Jesus, man eats his flesh, whereas before that, as Rupert notes, man was filled with vices like the pots of meat in the land of Egypt (cf. Exod 16:3) Rupert relates this image to the words of Jesus himself, who said: "I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. (John 6:48–51).[19] In this way, Jesus asserts that it is God and not Moses who gives bread to man. Its meaning, on the other hand, can only be known and accepted through faith, that is, by listening to God and learning his teaching.[20]

The writings of Rupert of Deutz show that the manna is a harbinger of the Incarnate Word of God made flesh (cf. John 1:1.14). Jesus himself testified to this in the Gospel by saying: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven" (John 6:51), yet Rupert notes that as early as the moment of raining down the manna God wanted to show that "[...] man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deut 8:3). Rupert claims that this purity of intention is in line with the teaching of God, who raises his son in the same way as a man (cf. Deut 8:5). In this way, God's eternal wisdom was made known to the world (cf. Eph 3:10). Man can access this manna through baptism.[21] It allows him to eat the Flesh and Blood of Christ, a food that gives life to those who receive it.[22]

The subject of contemplation and reflection on the eve of the Nativity of the Lord is not only the mere fact of his birth but also the search for answers to the question of why he was born and how great and powerful he is. Rupert contemplates this based on the following words: "Look how great, how glorious he is!" (cf. Heb 7:4).[23] This passage comes from an antiphon that was recited in the last days of Advent, as reflected by the oldest surviving antiphonaries of the medieval era.[24]

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18   Cf. Hesbert, *Antiphonale missarum*, 12–13.
19   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 69).
20   Cf. Okure, "Ewangelia według św. Jana," 1332.
21   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 72–73).
22   Cf. Megger, "Eucharystia," 28.
23   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 69).
24   According to surviving sources, this antiphon was part of the Officium at various times during the last week of Advent. As an antiphon to the *Magnificat*, it was sung on Tuesday according to the antiphonary of Saint-Loup of Benevento, on Thursday according to the antiphonaries of Saint-Gall, Saint-Denis, Compiègne, Monza, and Verona, and on Friday as per the antiphonary of Ivrée. According to the antiphonary of Saint-Maur-les-Fossés, it was also sung on Friday as the first antiphon during laudes, whereas according

Yet another symbol that shows the mystery of the Eve of the Nativity is the gate of heaven. The offertory of this Mass calls for the ancient doors to be lifted so that the King of glory and Lord almighty may come in (cf. Ps 24[23]:7.9.10) Moreover, Rupert relates another passage of this Psalm — "For he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters" (Ps 24[23]:2) — to the Christian people, who rank higher than the princes of the world.[25]

The *introit* passage is also repeated during the gradual of this Mass but at that point is accompanied by another verse of the psalm: "Hear us, Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock. You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh." (Ps 80[79]:2).[26] Rupert recognizes this psalm as a prayer for Jews and Gentiles, so that they may eventually be converted to the Lord. He points out that in this psalm, he relates Israel to Joseph, who was described as "a fruitful vine near a spring" (cf. Gen 49:22).[27] In translating this biblical passage, Rupert points to the explanation of Raban Maura (d. 856).[28]

Rupert shows the interrelationship between the words of the *introit* and the Christmas Eve Mass readings. Thus, he answers the question of how and through which gate the Lord sent manna to mankind. The gate was the Virgin Mary, for it was through her, with the power of the Holy Spirit, that God sent His son (cf. Matt 1:18–21) who, according to the flesh, originated from the lineage of David (cf. Rom 1:1–6).[29] According to prophecy, this refers to the locked eastern gate of the Jerusalem temple through which the Lord himself, the God of Israel, has entered (cf. Ezek 44:2–3).[30] For it was the Lord himself who opened this gate, which Rupert calls the greatest of gates (Latin: *Maxima namque portarum coeli*), to rain down manna. Through this gate, the Incarnate Word of God descended like dew and manna from heaven (cf. Num 11:9) Rupert also interprets the words of the *introit* eschatically since the word "tomorrow" refers to the glory of the resurrection when people will not only see Jesus' human nature but also experience his divinity, for the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all people will see the salvation of God (cf. Isa 40:5, Luke 3:6).[31] In this way, he shows the unity of the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption.

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to the antiphonary of Rheinau, it was sung on Saturday. In contrast, an 11th century French antiphonary states that it was sung as the fourth one during the laudes; cf. Hesbert, *Corpus antiphonalium*, 291.

25 Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 69).
26 Cf. Hesbert, *Antiphonale missarum*, 12–13.
27 Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 70).
28 Cf. Rabanus Maurus, *De universo libri viginti duo* (PL 111, 47B).
29 Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 70).
30 Cf. Ruiz, "Księga Ezechiela," 978.
31 Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 70–71).

2. Man's Sin and the Incarnation of the Eternal Word — The Atonement Cover

The reflection on the necessity of the original parents committing original sin, its scourge, as well as God's plan of salvation, has accompanied Christianity since its early days. This question became particularly pertinent in the medieval era when sin was treated ritualistically, as an evil external act, due to the emergence of Penitentials.[32] Therefore, from the biblical standpoint, Rupert takes up the question of why God allowed the fall of man and whether his Incarnation was necessary. The starting point for these reflections is not only the event connected with original sin in paradise but above all God's plan that the Israelites, who were suffering famine in Egypt, should be led out of slavery by Moses and Aaron, with this process to be accompanied by various signs and miracles (cf. Ps 105[104]:16.23). Thus, by allowing the reason for which the people of Israel went to Egypt and were later freed by Moses and Aaron, God also revealed his power among the Gentiles (cf. Ps 77[76]:15; Ps 96[95]:3) so that they would know that he alone is God (cf. Ps 105[104]:7). By pointing to this divine wisdom, Rupert emphasizes that these events are a reflection of the divine justice that made it possible to bring about great things despite Adam's sin and the famine of Jacob's time, based on the intention to do good things. This is also how earlier events became a picture (cf. 1 Cor 10:11) and a foreshadowing of the good things to come (cf. Col 2:17).[33] This particularly highlights the fact that these events reflect the ultimate, indestructible, eschatological reality that comes from Christ.[34]

In his reflection on God's scourge and the fall of man, Rupert points out that one could also ask in this context why God gave man a commandment that he knew man would not be able to keep. In response, he points out that a commandment is the beginning of all teaching — especially of humility (cf. Rom 12:3). Nor is the purpose of reflecting on God's scourge and man's fall to be a scientific decision about the rightness of God's teaching, but rather thanksgiving that God, through the Incarnation of his Son, has shown his face to man (cf. Ps 80[79]:4) and thus brought about the conception of the "new man" (cf. Eph 2:15; 4:24).[35]

Due to his Incarnation, Christ is compared to the atonement cover that was on the Ark of the Covenant (cf. Exod 25:10–22). In explaining this symbol, Rupert starts from the custom of two readings before the Gospel on this feast day — one from the Old and one from the New Testament. Though unknown in the Roman liturgy during Rupert's time, this custom existed in the Gallican tradition and some Eastern

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32   Cf. Pryszmont, "Grzech," 271.
33   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 71–72).
34   Cf. Mora Paz, "List do Kolosan," 1545.
35   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 73–74).

churches since the sixth century.[36] Rupert explains this custom by citing St. Gregory the Great (d. 604), who compared the two readings to the cherubs that were mounted on the atonement cover.[37] The cherubim were facing each other and had their wings spread upward, covering the atonement cover (cf. Exod 25:20). Rupert noted that since "cherub" means "fullness of knowledge," they symbolize the Old and New Testaments. In contrast, the board of the atonement cover is a sign of the Incarnation of Christ, in accordance with the words of St. John that Jesus "is the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 2:2). At the same time, it is a foreshadowing of Christ's sacrifice, which cannot be construed as his death alone — it also refers to the knowledge and will that he consciously offered himself as a sacrifice, thus fulfilling the will of the Father.[38]

While looking at God Incarnate, the two cherubs do not stop looking at each other because together they reveal the mystery of his plan of salvation (cf. 1 Cor 4:1). Thus, Rupert indicates that the two cherubs — readings from the two Testaments — are looking at the atonement cover: The Gospel, i.e., the Word made flesh. Therefore, Rupert emphasizes the connection between the salvation awaited by Judah and Jerusalem and the fact that the station church in Rome on this day is the Basilica of Saint Mary Major (*Statio ad S. Mariam maiorem ad Praesepe*) since salvation came through the womb of the Virgin Mary as the gate of heaven.[39] This is due to the custom of celebrating this day's liturgy at station churches, a custom that has evolved over the centuries.[40]

3. The Nativity of the Lord — The New Creation of the Light of the World

Yet another symbol that shows the mystery of the Incarnation is light. Rupert's starting point is not the celebration of *Solis Invicti*, but the creation of the world. According to medieval computistics, Jesus was supposed to be born on Sunday night.[41]

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36 Cf. Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia*, 505–509.
37 Cf. Gregorius Magnus, *XL homiliarum in Evangelia libri duo* (PL 76, 1191).
38 Cf. Migut, "Ofiara Chrystusa," 235.
39 Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 74).
40 The first Mass on Nativity Day was celebrated at the Basilica of Saint Mary Major. Starting from the 4th century, the second mass was held at Rome's Basilica of St. Anastasia of Sirmium. The third Mass of the day was originally celebrated at St. Peter's Basilica, as witnessed by the oldest surviving Mass antiphonaries from the 8th to 10th centuries. From the twelfth century on, the *statio* of this Mass took place at the Basilica of Saint Mary Major; cf. Kirsz, *Die Stationskirchen*, 237–239; Hesbert, *Antiphonale missarum*, 14–15.
41 According to medieval computistics, until the thirteenth century, the daily date was marked by concurrentes (*concurrentes septimanae, epactae solis, epactae maiores*), and the corresponding age by solar

Thus, the coming of the Son of God into the world took place on the same day on which God had once said "Let there be light," and there was light (Gen 1:3). These words also refer to the fact that "Even in darkness light dawns for the upright" (Ps 112[111]:4; Isa 58:10) and that the Lord will visit his own like "the rising sun [that] will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death," (Luke 1:78), so that the birth which took place at night (cf. Isa 60:3), at a time when the sun was rising, should be a sign that he will come to lighten the night (cf. Exod 14:20).[42] The last passage refers to the pillar of cloud that stood between the Egyptian army and the Israelite army during the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. For the Egyptians, the cloud was darkness; for the Israelites, it illuminated the night and kept them safe.[43]

The initial Nativity of Jesus is the recollection of the creation of the Eternal Word by the Father, that is, by means of the mystery of his being. Rupert reminds us that it took place before the "Morning Star" (Ps 110[109]:3), that is, before the creation of angels and other creatures (Prov 8:22), and as Jesus was born, he came into the Virgin's womb as "blessed in the name of the Lord" (Ps 118[117]:26).[44]

The "genealogy" (cf. Matt 1:1–17), which was read on Christmas Eve, corresponds with the image of the creation of new light. This is because the Gospel of Matthew was regarded as the book of the new beginning and new creation that Jesus Christ had accomplished.[45] Rupert compares the genealogy to a ladder from Jacob's dream, on which he saw angels ascending and descending (cf. Gen 28:12–13). By type and antitype, this ladder foreshadowed the Incarnation (cf. 1 Cor 10:11). At the top step of the ladder was St. Joseph, to whom God entrusted the care of Jesus. Similar to Jacob, Jesus was also brought by his guardian to Egypt and brought back again after Herod's death (cf. Matt 2:20). Thus, on this night of vigil, the Church repeats after the Bride from the Song of Songs: "I slept but my heart was awake" (Song 5:2).[46]

The ladder of Jesus' genealogy is based on the salvation of man, which was fulfilled in Christ and was meant to point to the universality of salvation, as expressed by the following blessing: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring" (Gen 28:14). The universality of salvation was emphasized by the inclusion of Rahab the Harlot and Ruth the Moabite in Jesus' genealogy (cf. Matt 1:5).

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and lunar regulars. St. Bede the Venerable (d. 735) claimed that the concurrentes were counted from 24 March. According to Rupert, the value of the concurrentes for the year of Jesus' birth was 5, meaning that 24 March fell on a Thursday. When a fixed number for the given month is added to the concurrentes, which in the case of December is 7, it follows that 1 December also fell on a Thursday, and as such, 25 December fell on a Sunday; cf. Grotefend, *Zeitrechnung*, 27–28, 163–164; Wąsowicz, "Konkurrenty," 648–649; Wąsowicz, "Regulary," 1325–1326.

42   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 75).
43   Cf. Craghan, "Księga Wyjścia," 360.
44   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 75).
45   Cf. Paciorek, *Ewangelia według świętego Mateusza*, 81.
46   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 75–76).

According to Jewish tradition, these women helped fulfill God's plans through Israel.[47] According to Rupert, this emphasized that according to the flesh Jesus was born not only of the Jewish people but also of the Gentiles. Thus, he compares these nations to two parts of a ladder that "support" Jesus as he ascends to the edge of heaven (cf. Ps 19[18]:7). Thus were fulfilled the words of Jesus who said: "Very truly I tell you, you will see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man" (John 1:51). The Incarnation and Redemption opened the gates of heaven to allow one to accompany the Lord in "descending" into his suffering and humiliation on the cross and "entering" into the mystery of his deity. In the next section, Rupert draws a parallel between the fact that Jacob, upon awakening, immediately "took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it" (cf. Gen 28:18). Rupert relates this image to Christ, who is the precious cornerstone (cf. 1 Pet 2:6) which, like a solid foundation (cf. Eph 2:20), was laid under the heart of man and anointed with the oil of thanksgiving.[48] Jesus thus became the cornerstone of the Church built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.[49]

Among the significant issues surrounding the genealogy of Jesus, there is also the question posed by Rupert himself: Why does the genealogy of Jesus lead to Joseph and not to the Virgin Mary? In answering it, Rupert explains that it is not so much a matter of showing biological relatedness as of pointing to those in the generation of Abraham and David to whom God addressed the word that later became flesh (cf. John 1:14). Rupert states that there is no doubt here that God's words: "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife [...]" (Matt 1:20) were addressed to Abraham first and to St. Joseph last. These three people in Jesus' lineage, Abraham, David, and Joseph, were mentioned as the greatest to whom the promise was made. Abraham heard the following promise: "[...] through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed" (Gen 22:18); David heard what follows: "One of your own descendants I will place on your throne" (Ps 132[131]:11), whereas Joseph heard about the birth of Jesus, who would save the people from their sins (cf. Matt 1:21). Rupert links these three promises with the three gifts given by the Three Wise Men, as they pertained to a mortal man, a king, and God.[50]

In another section, Rupert vividly depicts Jesus' genealogy by comparing it to an angler catching fish. Jesus' generations are a rope that has been cast into the waters of this world. At its end was a fishing hook, i.e., Jesus, the true God and true man, who would capture Leviathan, the great serpent of evil that devours the souls of men (cf. Isa 27:1; cf. Job 40:25). This is because Leviathan was deemed the personification

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[47]   Cf. Leske, "Ewangelia według św. Mateusza," 1146.
[48]   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 76–77).
[49]   Cf. MacDonald, "List do Efezjan," 1524.
[50]   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 77–78).

of all evil, which will be destroyed once and for all in the end times.[51] On further reflection, Rupert points out that a fisherman's rope is not directly connected to the body, but to a special iron handle, and so the genealogy leads not to Mary but rather to Joseph.[52] This thought is Rupert's original remark on this issue and is not found in the writings of the theologians he cites.

4. The Eternal Nativity of Jesus the Son of God — the First Mass

The following passage of the *introit* of Nativity Day's first Mass is fundamental to the consideration of the mystery of the Nativity: "[The Lord] said to me, 'You are my son; today I have become your father'" (Ps 2:7). This antiphon is also one of the oldest liturgical texts.[53] Rupert refers here to the words of St. Augustine, who points out that in eternity, the word "today" does not mean something past or future, but the present, since that which is eternal always exists.[54] These words are repeated in the graduale, in the Alleluia verse, and in the antiphon for Holy Communion, and express the joy emphasized by the antiphon for the offering: "Let the heavens rejoice" (Ps 96[95]:11).[55] Rupert takes a holistic look at this event of eternal Nativity and relates it to the earthly birth, which is highlighted by a pericope taken from the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2:1–14).[56] This event reveals the truth that according to God's plan, the Savior of the world was born like a poor shepherd, and hence the truly poor will experience the blessings of the Hope of Israel.[57]

Jesus as the firstborn was yet another topic of Rupert's reflections. He begins by citing the heresy of Helvidius (4th/5th century), a disciple of the Arian Bishop Auxentius of Milan (d. 373), who questioned Mary's virginity by claiming that she also had other offspring with Joseph — brothers of the Lord (cf. Matt 13:55–56).[58] In an apologetic work against Helvidius that showed the perpetual virginity of the blessed Mary, St. Jerome explained that while every only-begotten son is also a firstborn, not every firstborn is an only-born. Namely, both a child after whom other children are born and that after whom no other children are born are firstborns.[59] By using this

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51   Cf. Rubinkiewicz, "Lewiatan," 893.
52   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 79).
53   Cf. Hesbert, *Antiphonale missarum*, 12–13.
54   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 79).
55   Cf. Hesbert, *Antiphonale missarum*, 12–13.
56   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 79).
57   Cf. Abogunrin, "Ewangelia według św. Łukasza," 1245.
58   Cf. Kowalski, "Helwidiusz," 670.
59   "Omnis unigenitus est primogenitus: non omnis primogenitus est unigenitus. Primogenitus est, non tantum post quem et alii: sed ante quem nullus" (Hieronymus, *De perpetua virginitate B. Mariae. Adversus Helvidium. Liber unus* 10 [PL 23, 192]).

phrase, the evangelist emphasized that the Virgin Mary became a mother. St. Bede the Venerable explained the issue in a similar way.[60] Based on these testimonies, Rupert explains that Jesus is "the firstborn over all creation" (Col 1:15) and "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24). He is "the firstborn among many brothers and sisters" (Rom 8:29), or the Wisdom that came out of the mouth of the Most High before all creation (cf. Sir 24:1–3), as emphasized by the chants and readings during this Holy Mass.[61]

5. The Earthly Birth of Jesus — The Second Mass

Rupert portrays the officium of the second Mass as closely linked with the term "Shepherd." In particular, the Gospel first mentions the shepherds who said: "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about" (Luke 2:15). He refers these words to the shepherds of souls who, likewise, in the "night" or in this life, "watch over" and "guard" the flock of the Lord (cf. Luke 2:8) In accordance with the words "for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care." (Ps 95:7). This is why it is, according to Rupert, a cause for joy sung in the introit: "A light will shine upon us today" (cf. Isa 9:1), for "The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed in majesty and armed with strength" (Ps 93:1).[62] Through the Incarnation, the Lord became King, and His adornment, as Rupert points out, is His mercy, glory, grace and love. Thus, the goodness and love of the Savior (cf. Titus 3:4–7), on whom the Spirit of God rested (cf. Isa 61:1–3; 62:11–12), was made manifest. He is praised in the gradual as "blessed" (cf. Ps 118:26) who has been "robed with majesty" (Ps 93:1), as mentioned in the Alleluia verse. The *offertory* praises Him for having established the world (cf. Ps 93:1), and His throne is unshaken forever (cf. Ps 93:2). It is the source of joy for the Daughter of Zion (cf. Zech 9:9), the Church.[63] These liturgical texts were also known in the oldest antiphonaries.[64]

It should be noted that the second Mass was to be celebrated at St. Anastasia Station Church. This was to be a reminder that under Diocletian it was on this day that she suffered the martyr's death when she was burned at the stake. She was venerated

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60   "Quia et testimonium legis, et aperta ratio declarat omnes unigenitos etiam primogenitos, non autem omnes primogenitos etiam unigenitos posse vocari" (Beda Venerabilis, *In Lucae Evangelium expositio* [PL 92, 331]).

61   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 80).

62   Cf. Hesbert, *Antiphonale missarum*, 14–15.

63   Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 80–81).

64   Cf. Hesbert, *Antiphonale missarum*, 14–15.

in Constantinople on December 25, and this church was designated at the foot of the Palatine because of the Byzantine imperial administration living on the Palatine.[65]

6. The Experience of God's Salvation in Christ – Third Mass

The powerful joy of the mystery of the Nativity resounds during the main Mass. According to the gradual, all nations have seen the salvation of God (cf. Ps 98:3).[66] Rupert emphasizes that on this day the mighty voice of the trumpet is sounded heralding the coming of the Lord, which is particularly resounding in the Gospel in the prologue of St. John (cf. John 1:1–14). It is, he writes, the loud "sound" of the heavens that praises the glory of God and spreads throughout the earth (Ps 19:5). This voice, as Rupert notes, proclaims the works of His hands (cf. Ps 19:2), brings good news, proclaims peace to all the pagans, and heralds salvation (cf. Isa 52:7).[67] This fulfills the promise of Isaiah's prophecy about God returning to Zion to occupy His throne.[68]

The theme of joy resounding on the day of Jesus' birth is the words of the *introit* of the third Mass: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given" (Isa 9:5), so the verse encourages the faithful to sing a new song to the Lord (cf. Ps 98:1).[69] Thus, as Rupert notes, "The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God" (Isa 52:10), which is proclaimed in the first reading. This Child is the Word through Whom God spoke in the last days (cf. Heb 1:1–12). Therefore, Rupert emphasizes that in this way all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God (cf. Ps 98:3), as indicated in the gradual, and the theme of the vision is the great light that has come down to earth and the true light that enlightens every person (cf. John 1:1.9).[70] The Word, then, is life, and in man it becomes the "light" of life, the illumination of his conscience so that he can discern between good and evil. For light is the principle of life.[71]

Rupert's interpretation of the liturgical texts or of the celebrations and customs at the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord made it clear that this mystery cannot be reduced to the sobbing of a baby in a manger, but to the powerful "voice" of the apostles that spreads throughout the earth (cf. Ps 19:5). This voice, in the words of St. Paul, declares that this is the great mystery of godliness, because: He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among

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65 Cf. Mieczkowski, *Jednoczący charakter*, 197; Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 81).
66 Cf. Hesbert, *Antiphonale missarum*, 14–15.
67 Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 81).
68 Cf. Pelletier, "Księga Izajasza," 1146; Brzegowy, *Księga Izajasza*, 493.
69 Cf. Hesbert, *Antiphonale missarum*, 14–15.
70 Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 82).
71 Cf. Okure, "Ewangelia według św. Jana," 1320.

the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory. (1 Tim 3:16).[72] This early Christian hymn thus emphasizes that through the epiphany of God in Jesus Christ, the ecclesial community has become the place of His presence.[73]

The universality of the salvation experience is indicated not only by the liturgical texts, which were interpreted allegorically, but also by the manner of celebration itself. Rupert pointed out the old custom of the deacon going in procession with the Gospel Book from the south to the north to proclaim the Gospel. The words of the prophet Ezekiel were invoked for clarification: "Son of man, set your face against Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuary." (Ezek 21:2) and the prophet Habakkuk that the Lord would come from the south (cf. Hab 3:3).[74] In this way, both the celebrations, texts and liturgical customs associated with the Nativity reveal the essence and significance of this mystery in the history of humanity and the world.

Conclusions

In the history and theology of the liturgy, the views of Rupert of Deutz OSB, a representative of the medieval monastic school of theology, hold a special place in the interpretation of the Incarnation. He bases his views in *Liber de divinis officiis* on the Mass forms of both the Vigil Mass and the three Masses celebrated on the very day of the solemnity of the Nativity of Jesus: at midnight, at dawn, and during the day. Rupert shows the uniqueness of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word by presenting the symbolism of this day in his own way.

As a starting point, we should note, following Rupert, the interpretation of the Old Testament texts proclaimed on Nativity Day beginning with the Vigil Mass. A paraphrase of the Old Testament text: "Today you will know that the Lord is coming to save us, and in the morning you will see His glory" known from the Israelites' exodus through the desert allowed to describe the event of the Nativity of the Lord Jesus with events related to sending manna to the world. The comparison reveals that Christ is the very manna – the bread from heaven that came down from heaven. He unambiguously relates this issue to the Eucharist, explaining that the Lord himself will give the true food to his people, not Moses. Also worthy of note is his emphasis on the unity of the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption, while indicating that the word "tomorrow" – morning refers to the revelation of the full glory of Jesus born experienced in his resurrection. Christ, the true manna, came into the world through the gate through which the eternal King of Glory and Lord of Hosts entered.

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[72] Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 82–83).
[73] Cf. Schroeder, "Pierwszy List do Tymoteusza," 1576; Haręzga, *Pierwszy i Drugi list do Tymoteusza*, 246.
[74] Cf. Rupertus, *Liber de divinis officiis* (PL 170, 83).

The reference of this symbol to the closed eastern gate of the Jerusalem temple, through which the Lord himself entered, points to the Virgin Mary. The closing of this gate signifies the eternal Virginity of Mary.

In interpreting the mystery of the Nativity, Rupert points to the interrelationship between salvation and sin. He does not begin this interpretation with the sin of our first parents in paradise, but with the dispensation of providence when the Israelites experienced famine in Egypt. The Dispensation of Providence concerned bringing the Israelites into Egypt in Jacob's day so that God would accomplish great things during the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. The day of Nativity is thus a new day of the creation of light. The originality of thought, then, includes showing the interrelationship between the Nativity of Jesus and the creation of new light. It should be noted that Rupert does not compare this celebration to the pagan festival of the invincible sun (*sol invicti*) but that, according to medieval computation, Jesus was to be born on Sunday, the first day of creation. Thus Christ as the Light of the world became the propitiation from the Ark of the Covenant – that is, the atoning sacrifice for sins.

The genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew's Gospel was also read in the key of new creation and new beginning. On the one hand, Rupert compares it to the ladder that Jacob dreamed, on which the Savior came. The inclusion of two women, Rahab and Ruth, in the genealogy indicates, according to Rupert, the universality of salvation. On the other hand, an original thought is the comparison of genealogy to a fisherman casting a fishing rod into the depths of the sea, where the bait on this rod is Jesus, true God and true man, who was to catch Leviathan – the eternal enemy of mankind. These contents thus make it possible to show both the significance of the eternal Son of God and his earthly birth for the purpose of experiencing the mystery of God's salvation in Christ.

The Nativity of Jesus Christ represents a special moment in the history of human and world salvation. Over the centuries this event has been interpreted in different ways, seeking the deepest understanding and insight into this mystery, which is constantly being unveiled in the liturgy. The role of medieval theology, especially the monastic theological school represented by Rupert of Deutz, should not be forgotten in this quest. For the knowledge of the views of the past makes it possible to see in a full light the splendor of the mystery of the Incarnation down through the centuries.

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John Chrysostom's Commentary on the Collection for Jerusalem in Rom 15:25–32

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Abstract: John Chrysostom (349–407) provides the most comprehensive commentary on the Pauline epistles from the patristic era. During his priestly mission in Antioch (386–397) and his episcopate in Constantinople (398–403), he wrote over 200 homiletic commentaries on the entire Pauline epistolary body of work. This research attempts to analyze how Chrysostom interprets Paul's verses concerning the collection and uses them to organize and transform the ecclesial groups into communities of love, particularly paying attention to the poor. The study focuses on the works of John Chrysostom on Rom 15:25–29. Based on his interpretation, the status of debtors in the spiritual blessings is the main reason why the Romans had to be more earnest in almsgiving, imitating the Macedonians and the Achaeans who had helped the community in Jerusalem. He also encourages them to reform their lives, cutting off the superfluities, luxurious lifestyles, and bad attitudes in squandering money on other selfish needs. At the same time, he stirrers them up to meet their needs moderately, which meant using only the goods that are truly necessary for a healthy and dignified life so that they would always have something to share with the poor.

Keywords: John Chrysostom, collection, Romans, almsgiving, Jerusalem Church

John Chrysostom (349–407) is one of the remarkable ancient Greek ecclesiastical writers. The date of his birth is uncertain. Scholars propose dates between 344 and 354, but the one that seems to fit most of the known facts is 349.[1] He wrote numerous comments on the Epistles of Paul and his exegetical works provide the most comprehensive commentary on Pauline epistles in the patristic era. Moreover, they survived entirely in the original language.[2] During his priestly mission in Antioch (386–397) and his episcopate in Constantinople (398–403), he made homiletic commentary on the entire Pauline epistolary body of work.[3] These comments, therefore, explain the meaning of scriptural texts to the living audiences in a liturgical context. Some were probably part of the preparation for preaching, and another person wrote the others while the preacher was speaking. The rest was written after being

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[1]   Baur, *John Chrysostom*, 3; Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 4 and n. 12 (Appendix B, 296–298).
[2]   Mitchel, *The Heavenly Trumpet*, 5.
[3]   Maxwell, *Christianization*, 3; Zincone, "Giovanni Crisostomo," 591.

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delivered, either from memory or the notes, either a short or long time afterward.[4] Moreover, it is notable that, in antiquity, the homilies of Christian exegetes and bishops, especially those of Origen and Chrysostom, are nothing but a running commentary, taken down in shorthand from oral delivery.[5]

The exact dates of the homilies on Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* (*Hom. Rom.*) and the places in which they were proclaimed and composed are uncertain and difficult to determine. However, having studied the chronology of Chrysostom's life and works and also comparing it with the study of other scholars, Chrysostomus Baur, one of his modern biographers, suggests that, in all probability, Chrysostom began his preaching activity in 386 with the homilies on Genesis. In the same years and after, he composed many other homilies on the Gospel of Matthew in 390, then the Gospel of John in 391, and soon after, he may have directly begun writing the ones on the Pauline epistles.[6] Regarding their place of composition, they were most likely delivered in Antioch because Chrysostom provided in it a clue that made it possible to identify him as a preacher at Antioch since he called himself ποίνην, which means a shepherd.[7] In fact, he says, "I have said of the best shepherd (περὶ ἀρίστων ποιμένων), not of myself and those of our days, but of any one that may be such as Paul was, such as Peter, such as Moses."[8] This internal indication, then, is also confirmed and supported by scholarly studies. Charles Marriott, for example, affirmed that the elaborate composition of these homilies would indicate that they must have been delivered before Chrysostom was engaged in his episcopal responsibilities in Constantinople.[9] Moreover, based on his speaking style, they seemed to be addressed to persons who suitably could be described as the Antiochians and certainly could not be referred to as the people of Constantinople. In addition, C. Baur also affirmed that Chrysostom most likely delivered the *Hom. Rom.* around 391 in Antioch as his first work on Paul's epistles.[10]

At the beginning of his *Hom. Rom.*, Chrysostom stated that there are two important questions in interpreting the Epistle to the Romans, i.e., clarifying the date of its composition and Paul's purposes in writing it. Regarding the date of when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans, he asserted:

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[4] Siegart, "Homily and Panegyrical Sermon," 423; Baur, *John Chrysostom*, 220, 284; Mugridge, "Writing and Writers in Antiquity," 543–580.

[5] Siegart, "Homily and Panegyrical Sermon," 442.

[6] Baur, *John Chrysostom*, 284–304.

[7] Abbott-Smith, *Manual Greek Lexicon*, 370; LSJ, "ποίμνη," 1430; BDAG, "ποίμνη," 843.

[8] Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 29 (Field I, 460). The Greek texts are taken from the critical edition of Frederick Field (Iohannes Chrysostomus, *In Divi Pauli Epistulam ad Romanos*), written as Field followed by the volume and page number.

[9] Marriott, "Preface to Homilies on Romans," 331.

[10] Baur, *John Chrysostom*, 284–304.

As we are going to enter fully into this Epistle, it is necessary to give the date also at which it was written. […] For both those to the Corinthians were sent before this […] But that to the Thessalonians also seems to me to be before the Epistle to the Corinthians […] This Epistle then is later than those, but prior (πρώτη) to those from Rome […] it was from Rome he wrote to the Philippians; […] and to the Hebrews from thence likewise […]. And the Epistle to Timothy he sent also from Rome, when in prison […]. And that to Philemon is also very late, (for he wrote it in extreme old age […]), yet previous to that to the Colossians. […] And that to the Galatians seems to me to be before that to the Romans.[11]

As can be seen here, Chrysostom places the Epistle to the Romans in chronological succession together with other epistles by Paul. Though he was aware that the Bible has a different order, the understanding of dates and the chronology of Paul's epistles is not aimless and superfluous. On the contrary, he was convinced that "The date of the Epistles (ὁ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν χρόνος) contributes no little to what we are seeking for."[12] This statement affirms that Chrysostom rightly attaches much importance to the time and circumstance of writing, which is not indifferent to understanding the content of epistles. For example, Paul's epistles to the Romans and those to the Galatians and Corinthians comprise the great doctrinal and moral discussions that are very important in the study of Pauline theology.[13] Therefore, while interpreting the verses of Paul's collection, Chrysostom reveals – as this study shows – not only their practical implication but also their theological relevance.

Regarding the second aspect, Chrysostom noted that Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans for two purposes. First, he wanted to proclaim the grace he received from God as the minister of Christ and evangelist to the nations, including the Romans. Second, he wished to lead them to an orderly life through his praise, encouragement, and correction. Then, quoting several verses of the epistle itself, Chrysostom stated:

For one finds him bearing testimony to them that they are "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another" (Rom 15:14). Why then does he write to them? "Because of the grace of God," he says, "which is given unto me, that I should be the minister of Christ Jesus" (Rom 15:15.16). Wherefore also he says in the beginning: "I am under obligation, so I am eager to preach the Gospel to you also who are in Rome" (Rom 1:14.15). For what is said – as that they are "able to exhort others also" – and the like, rather belongs to encomium and encouragement and the correction afforded by means of a letter, was needful even for these. For since he had not yet been present, he brings the men to good order in two ways, both by the profitableness of his letter and by the expectation of his presence.[14]

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11   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.*, Argument (Field I, 2–4).
12   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.*, Argument (Field I, 2–4).
13   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* (NPNF 1, 336–337).
14   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.,* Argument (Field I, 5).

Moreover, another interesting observation about this epistle made by Chrysostom was that he showed the close connection between Paul and the Romans even though he had not yet met them in person. He expressed his admiration for Paul again, especially for his great paternal affection and love for the Romans, saying:

> For such was that holy soul, it comprised the whole world and carried about all men in itself thinking the nearest relationship to be that in God. And he loved them so as if he had begotten them all, or rather showed a greater instinctive affection than any father's toward all. For such is the grace of the Spirit, it exceeds the pangs of the flesh, and displays a more ardent longing than theirs. And this one may see especially in the soul of Paul, who having as it were become winged through love, went continually round to all, abiding nowhere nor standing still. For, since he had heard Christ saying, "Peter, do you love me? Feed My lambs" (John 21:15), and setting forth this as the greatest test of love, he displayed it in a very high degree.[15]

This paper answers the following question: How did Chrysostom interpret the collection for Jerusalem in Rom 15:25–32 and use this collection to transform the Christian community to pay attention to the poor? Therefore, the paper may contribute to deepening the understanding of the teaching and practice of collection in the early Church through the account provided by John Chrysostom.

1. The Historical Aspect of Collection in Rom 15:25–32

Based on Paul's statement in Rom 15:25–27 and the quotation from Rom 15:23, Chrysostom, first of all, clarifies the actual situation of Paul at that time. He longed to visit the Romans but still intended to delay because he was making the journey to Jerusalem. He was then underway to minister unto the saints, i.e., deliver the contribution collected with pleasure by the Macedonians and the Achaeans. According to Chrysostom, this situation was the most reasonable and acceptable excuse for the delay in coming to Rome. Indeed, he stated:

> "At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem; they were pleased to do it, and indeed they are in debt to them" (Rom 15:25–27). Since he had said that "I have no longer any room for work in these regions," and, "I have longed for many years to come to you" (Rom 15:23) but he still intended to delay, lest it should be thought that he was making a jest of them. He mentions the cause also why

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15   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.,* Argument (Field I, 5).

he still puts it off, and he says, that "I am going unto Jerusalem," and is apparently giving the excuse for the delay.[16]

After having completed (ἐπιτελέσας) his ministry to the saints in Jerusalem, Paul planned to visit Rome during his journey to Spain (Rom 15:28). Chrysostom, indeed, furnished a literal interpretation of that "completion" of Paul's ministry to the saints, speaking about "royal treasuries" as a secure place in which the collection should be laid up. In other words, Paul's ministry to the saints would be completed only upon bringing the collection to the "royal treasuries" of the church in Jerusalem. Chrysostom explained the meaning of Paul's expression, "When therefore I have completed this, and have sealed unto them this fruit" (Rom 15:28), employing the adverb τουτέστιν (that is to say), and asserted, "When I have laid it up as it were in the royal treasuries (βασιλικὰ ταμιεῖα), as in a place secure from robbers and danger."[17]

Moreover, Chrysostom's thoughts on the "royal treasures" can be drawn from his discourse on almsgiving as follows:

> Let us comply, and, likewise, let us collect money in the home for the explicit purpose of almsgiving; and let there be established firmly in our homes sacred money laid away together with our private property, so that our personal possessions may be protected by it. For just as in royal treasuries, if it is revealed that in there, there is reserved the money of the ruled, and these through the money laid aside for the needy enjoy great security, likewise, in your own home if you lay aside money for the poor and on every Day of the Lord you collect it, the alms for the destitute will be insurance for the general funds. In this manner, you will become ordained by Paul a steward of your own money.[18]

According to the study by Floyd V. Filson, the royal treasuries "were in the north, west and south sides of the temple building. They were used as a kind of bank or safety deposit vault, protected not locks and steel, but chiefly by the awe inspired by the sacred surroundings."[19] In antiquity, "Temples quickly accumulated large amounts of coined money offered to the gods. Being the property of the gods, these temple funds enjoyed the unique security of divine protection, with the result that temples were considered the safest places for money," as Michael Rostovtzeff and Neill Q. Hamilton observed it.[20] However, based on the information of Josephus, "The temple of Jerusalem continued to be the place where Jews, both rich and poor,

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16   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30 (Field I, 460).
17   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30 (Field I, 462).
18   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Eleem.*, 4, 15.
19   Filson, "Temple, Synagogue, and Church," 82.
20   Rostovtzeff, *The Social*, 622, n. 46; Hamilton, "Temple Cleansing," 366.

kept their money on deposit" and "there were some deposits belonging to widows and orphans (2 Mac. 3, 10)." [21]

2. Paul's Way of Encouraging Works of Almsgiving

Dwelling on Paul's expression, "διακονῶν τοῖς ἁγίοις," by which Paul clarified the intention of his journey to Jerusalem (Rom 15:25), Chrysostom then noted another important object, i.e., the exhortation to ἐλεημοσύνη. The word ἐλεημοσύνη semantically is related to ἔλεος, that is, acting out of mercy, that is, kindness or concern expressed for someone in need.[22] For Chrysostom, therefore, such an expression indicates that Paul does not only recount his intention to go to Jerusalem but also exhorts the Romans to take part earnestly in almsgiving.[23] He noted: "By means of this he [Paul] also makes good another object, which is the exhorting of them to alms (τὸ προτρέψαι ἐκείνους εἰς ἐλεημοσύνην), and making them more in earnest about it. Since if he had not been minded to effect this, it had sufficed to say, 'I am going unto Jerusalem.' But now, he adds the reason of his journey. 'For I go,' he says, 'to minister to the saints.'"[24]

Furthermore, in Rom 15:29, where Paul states his hope to come to the Romans "in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ" (ἐν πληρώματι εὐλογίας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐλεύσομαι), Chrysostom did not interpret this expression as such. For him, the statement of Paul expresses his hope that when he would come to the Romans, he would find them abounding in blessing. Moreover, quoting Paul's expression in 2 Cor 9:5, Chrysostom clarifies that the term εὐλογία is "a name that [Paul] very commonly gives to ἐλεημοσύνη." Meanwhile, the additional words τοῦ εὐαγγελίου allow him to assert that Paul was speaking not only of χρημάτων but "of all other things" (περὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἁπάντων) or better "of all other good deeds" (περὶ πάντων ἁπλῶς τῶν κατορθωμάτων).[25] Here, it is very likely that Chrysostom was talking about money for the explicit purpose of almsgiving since when directing more attention to almsgiving, he usually urges everyone to collect a small sum

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21   Josephus, *Bell. Iud.*, V, 5, 1–7; VI, 5, 2.
22   BDAG, "ἔλεος," 316.
23   Cf. Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 43, 1: "And this also he did when writing to the Romans. For to them also while appearing to narrate the reason why he was going away to Jerusalem, he introduces thereupon his discourse about alms: 'At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem to minister to for the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints' (Rom 15:25–26)."
24   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom*. 30 (Field I, 460–461).
25   BDAG, "χρῆμα," 1089; Lampe, "κατόρθωμα," 735–736.

of money each day.[26] For that reason, Chrysostom further states that Paul hopes to find among the Romans "with the honor and freshness of all good deeds" and "worthy of countless praises in the Gospel." According to Paul's exhortation, the "good deeds" that make him worthy of receiving the "countless praises in the Gospel" include abundant money they collected for alms. For Chrysostom, however, almsgiving is "τὴν μητέρα τῶν ἀγαθῶν" (the mother of good deeds) or "τὸ κεφάλαιον τῶν ἀγαθῶν" (the chief of good things).[27] Indeed, Chrysostom declared:

> What is the force of, "In the fullness of the blessing?" He speaks either of money (χρημάτων) or of all good deeds in general. For blessing (εὐλογίαν) is a name he very commonly gives to alms. As when he says, "As a blessing and not as an exaction" (2 Cor 9:5). And it was customary of old for the thing to be so called. But as he has here added "of the Gospel," on this ground we assert that he speaks not of money only, but of all other things. As if he had said, "I know that when I come I shall find you with the honor and freshness of all good deeds about you, and worthy of countless praises in the Gospel."[28]

As previously mentioned, the expression "διακονῶν τοῖς ἁγίοις," for Chrysostom, does not only reveal the purpose of Paul's journey to Jerusalem but also his appeal to the Romans for almsgiving. Furthermore, he works on other Paul's expressions to present his ways for such exhortation. First of all, he quotes Paul's statement in Rom 15:27 that the Macedonians and the Achaeans are "debtors" to invite the Romans to imitate them, saying: "He dwells over the subject, and enters into reasoning, and says that they are 'debtors,' (ὀφειλέται) and that, 'if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings,' that they might learn to imitate these."[29]

2.1. Discreet Encouragement for Imitation

Chrysostom understands that, for Paul, the status of spiritual debtors is the main reason why the Romans have to be more earnest in almsgiving, imitating the Macedonians and the Achaeans pleased to serve the saints in Jerusalem in material things. This style of speaking, according to Chrysostom, should be more acceptable and bearable to the Romans since Paul did not deliver his appeal directly and "in the form of exhortation." If Paul only mentioned the contribution of the Macedonians and Achaeans, without emphasizing that "they are debtors," and then directly incited the Romans to imitate them, they might feel insulted. For that reason, Paul gave his

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26 Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Eleem.* 4, 15; Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 43, 2–4. Cf. Maxwell, *Christianization*, 163; Pizzolato, *Basilio di Cesarea*, 68, n. 233.

27 Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 7 (Field I, 96); Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 43, 1 (Field II, 534).

28 Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30 (Field I, 463).

29 Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30 (Field I, 461).

exhortation "in a more covert way," a way that arouses Chrysostom's admiration for Paul's wisdom. Therefore, he said:

> Wherefore, also there is much reason to admire his wisdom for devising this way of giving the advice. For they were more likely to bear it in this way than if he had said it in the form of exhortation; as then he would have seemed to be insulting them, if, with a view to incite them, he had brought before them Corinthians and Macedonians. Indeed, this is the ground on which he does incite the others as follows, saying, "I want you to know about the grace of God which has been given in the Churches of Macedonia" (2 Cor 8:1). And again he incites the Macedonians by these: "For your zeal," he says, "has stirred up most of them" (2 Cor 9:2). And by the Galatians in like manner he does this, as when he says, "As I directed the Churches of Galatia, so you also are to do" (1 Cor 16:1). But in the case of the Romans he does not do so, but in a more covert way (ὑπεσταλμένως). And he does this also in regard to the preaching, as when he says, "What? Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?" (1 Cor 14:36). For there is nothing so powerful as emulation (ζῆλος).[30]

Based on Paul's style of speaking from the different epistles, Chrysostom was able to differentiate the ways used by the apostle to preach almsgiving to different Christian communities. In fact, before exhorting the Romans to almsdeeds, Paul preached the same to the faithful in Corinth (2 Cor 8:1), Macedonia (2 Cor 9:2), and Galatia (1 Cor 16:1). To them, he gave direct exhortation in the form of incitation. On the contrary, to the Romans, he delivered his exhortation "in a more covert way," explaining that they were "debtors" in the same way as the Macedonians and the Achaeans.[31]

Chrysostom, then, declares that by this "covert way," Paul aroused among the Romans the spirit of ζῆλος (emulation), that is, a spirit of being rival or equal or surpassing someone.[32] Therefore, it can be said that Chrysostom understood Paul's expression in Rom 15:26–27 as a sign of Paul's interest and enthusiasm that made the Romans very eager or determined to do alms. Paul aroused in them a desire to equal or outperform the Macedonians and Achaeans in giving alms. However, the Greek term ζῆλος commonly is used in its negative sense, which means "jealousy."[33] Chrysostom used it here in its positive sense, denoting an "eager rivalry" or "emulation" in good deeds.

Moreover, convinced that "there is nothing so powerful as ζῆλος," Chrysostom then multiplies its references, quoting several of Paul's expressions from different

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[30] Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom*. 30 (Field I, 461).
[31] Cf. Origenes, *Comm. Rom*. X, 14.
[32] Corbett, "The Theory," 243–250.
[33] *1 Clem*. 1, 1; 4, 7–13 (LCL 24, 34–35.42–43).

epistles: "For elsewhere too he says, 'And so I ordain in all the Churches' (1 Cor 7:17); and again, 'As I teach them everywhere in every Church' (1 Cor 4:17). And to the Colossians he says, 'the Gospel is growing and bearing fruit in the whole world' (Col 1:6). This then he does here also in the case of alms."[34]

2.2. Paul's Terminology Interpreted by Chrysostom

Furthermore, dwelling on various expressions of Paul in the passage under discussion, Chrysostom invited his congregation to "consider what dignity there is in his expressions."[35] He, then, noted and clarified eight expressions of Paul: 1) διακονῶν, 2) εὐδόκησαν, 3) κοινωνίαν (τινά), 4) εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων, 5) ὀφειλέται, 6) λειτουργῆσαι and καρπός, 7) ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς, and 8) εὐλογίας. Paying attention to these expressions, Chrysostom did not only admire Paul's wisdom but also was able to present the ways of Paul in encouraging the Romans to become more zealous in doing alms.

First, Chrysostom notices and elucidates the verb διακονῶν used by Paul to express the intention of his journey to Jerusalem (Rom 15:25). For him, the fact that Paul does not merely say that he is going to Jerusalem "to carry alms" (ἐλεημοσύνην ἀποφέρων) but "to minister to the saints" (διακονῶν τοῖς ἁγίοις), reveals "how great a thing [he] is doing." Moreover, the almsgiving is a great thing since Paul, who was "the teacher of the world" (ὁ διδάσκαλος τῆς οἰκουμένης), decided to "be the bearer" of that alms.[36] As "the teacher of the world," of course, he had many fellow workers and disciples who could be sent to carry and hand over that alms.[37] However, he did not ask them to take over that ministry, but Paul himself undertook it. In addition, even though he "longed for many years" to visit Rome (Rom 15:23), he decided to delay and preferred to go to Jerusalem first to accomplish that ministry. All these facts are evidence to Chrysostom that such a gesture of almsgiving is a great thing, and making them aware of how great almsgiving is, is an effective way of making the Romans more zealous about it. Therefore, he declared: "For he does not say, I go to carry alms, but 'to minister' (διακονῶν). But if Paul ministers, just consider how great a thing is doing, when the Teacher of the world undertakes to be the bearer,

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34   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30.
35   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30.
36   For the epithet ὁ διδάσκαλος τῆς οἰκουμένης attributed to Paul in Chrysostom's writing, see Mitchel, *The Heavenly Trumpet*, 75, n. 29.
37   In 1 Cor 16:3–4, however, Paul declared that he will not carry the collection by himself but will accompany those whom they accredit to carry the gift to Jerusalem by letter, only when it seems advisable that he should go also, he will also go with them (Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 43, 4). Meanwhile, in 2 Cor 8:6.16–24, he delegated such work to Titus and the brethren he sent to the Corinthians (Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 2 Cor.* 18, 1).

and when on the point of traveling to Rome, and so greatly desiring them too, he yet prefers this to that."[38]

Second, dwelling on Paul's expression when he talks about the Macedonians and the Achaeans, who "were pleased to make a contribution for the poor" saints in Jerusalem (Rom 15:27), Chrysostom then clarifies the verb εὐδόκησαν, saying, "'For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased' (εὐδόκησαν), that is (τουτέστιν), it meets their approbation (ἐδοκίμασαν), their desire (ἐπεθύμησαν)."[39] Here, Chrysostom used two verbs, ἐδοκίμασαν (approved) and ἐπεθύμησαν (desired), to clarify the meaning of the term εὐδόκησαν (be pleased) used by Paul. It means, therefore, that the Macedonians and the Achaeans collected the contributions for the saints with pleasure because they indeed approved and desired to do it without any compulsion. In other words, Chrysostom indicates that Paul showed the Romans the inner spirit of the Macedonians and the Achaeans in doing alms and, at the same time, urged them to have the same spirit, approving and desiring to give charity with pleasure.

Third, paying attention, then, to the vocabulary of Paul regarding the alms, in which "he does not say ἐλεημοσύνην, but κοινωνίαν" (Rom 15:26), Chrysostom reveals that the apostle was not talking about a simple collection of money but a contribution. Paul also used the term κοινωνία to name the same deed of Macedonian and Achaean generosity toward the saint in Jerusalem when he stated in 2 Cor 8:4, "With much entreaty, begging us to receive the gift (χάρις) and fellowship (κοινωνία) of the ministration to the saints."[40] Chrysostom also clarified that Paul used the term κοινωνία as a proper name to exalt their deed of generosity when he said in another context of his homily: "See you, how he again exalts the deed, calling it by venerable names. For, since they were ambitious of a spiritual gift, he calls it by the name grace that they might eagerly pursue it; and again, by that of fellowship, that they might learn that they receive, not give only."[41]

Moreover, Chrysostom affirms that the pronoun τίς used by Paul in κοινωνίαν τινά "is not used without a meaning." This adjective commonly functions as "an indefinite quantity that is nevertheless not without importance" and could be translated as "some, considerable."[42] The expression κοινωνίαν τινά, therefore, must be understood as "considerable contribution." It means, even though their contribution is quantitatively indefinite, or at least Paul did not have in mind its exact amount, it should reach a considerable amount, sufficiently generous to merit attention and greater than the average. They indeed "overflowed in a wealth of liberality on their part. For they gave according to their means, […] and beyond their means, of their

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[38] Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom*. 30 (Field I, 461).
[39] Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom*. 30 (Field I, 462).
[40] Ogereau, "The Jerusalem Collection as Κοινωνία," 360–378.
[41] Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 2 Cor*. 16, 3.
[42] BDAG, "τίς," 1008.

own free will" (2 Cor 8:2–3).[43] For that reason, Chrysostom asserted that the τίς is intentionally used by Paul "to prevent his seeming to reproach these."[44]

Fourth, focusing on the phrase εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων, Chrysostom clarifies that at this point, Paul showed the twofold character of the beneficiaries (the poor saints in Jerusalem) of the contribution. They did not only suffer from poverty but also possessed the virtue of sanctity. Naturally, such character of the beneficiaries confirms even more how great almsgiving is. As previously discussed, the Macedonians and Achaeans were pleased to do it, and Paul preferred to hand it over by himself, delaying his journey to Rome. Chrysostom declared that "[Paul] does not say for the poor, merely, but 'for the poor saints,' (εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων) so making his recommendation twofold, both that from their virtue (τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρετῆς) and that from their poverty (τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς πενίας)."[45]

In the other context of his homily, Chrysostom also brought to light their virtue of sanctity manifested by the way they gave thanks to God not only for what they received but also for what was received by others (2 Cor 9:13). Even though they were in direst poverty and therefore in desperate need of help, they rejoiced greatly when the Corinthians not only provided assistance to them but also to others. For that reason, the apostle praised them, as Chrysostom asserted:

> They glorify God that you are so generous, not unto them only, but also unto all. And this again is made praise unto them that they gave thanks even for that which is bestowed upon others. For, says he, they do honor, not to their own concerns only, but also to those of others, and this although they are in the extremest poverty; which is an evidence of their great virtue. For nothing is so full of envy as the whole race of such as are in poverty. But they are pure from this passion; being so far from feeling pained because of the things you impart to others that they even rejoice over it no less than over the things themselves receive.[46]

Furthermore, while interpreting Rom 15:31, "That I may be delivered from the unbelievers in Judea," Chrysostom clarifies that by this statement, Paul added the ground why he took the office of ministering to the saints by himself and prioritized it. He was ardent to go to Jerusalem because the saints in Jerusalem were in danger due to many enemies and famine. Therefore, he stated:

> In saying this he showed, that certain evil wolves would attack them, and those who were wild beasts rather than men. And out of this he also found grounds for another thing, namely, for showing that he with good reason took the office of ministering to the saints,

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43   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 2 Cor.* 16, 2–3.
44   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30 (Field I, 462).
45   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30 (Field I, 462).
46   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 2 Cor.* 20, 2.

if, that is, the unbelievers were in such force that he even prayed to be delivered from them. For they who were amongst so many enemies (πολεμίων), were in danger of perishing by famine (λιμῷ) also. And therefore, there was absolute need of aid coming from other quarters to them.[47]

Here, Chrysostom probably refers to the great famine (AD 45–63) that swept the Roman Empire, including Jerusalem under Emperor Claudius (AD 41–54), as reported by a certain Agabus in Acts 11:27–30. This famine must have coincided with the incidents of the great Judaean famine, which occurred during the rule of the procurator Tiberius Alexander, that is, either in 46 or 47, as recorded by ancient historians, such as Josephus, Eusebius, Orosius, and Bede.[48]

Fifth, turning back to the term ὀφειλέται, Chrysostom explained this expression of Paul referring to the Macedonians and the Achaeans as "debtors." Quoting several scriptural verses, either indirectly or directly, he was able to explain its Christological and soteriological sense because both the Gospels and the epistles of Paul testify that neither the word of God nor the promise of salvation, nor the prophets, nor the apostles, nor even Christ, come originally from them. On the contrary, they were originally from the Jews and were only for their sake at first. Only then, due to the rejection of some of them and the testimonies of others who believe in Christ, did other nations also come to faith in Christ and receive the promise of salvation. Chrysostom spoke about the Christian Jews with whom the Romans were indebted. For, when he talked about the unbeliever Jews, he considered that the order of salvation was reversed, attributing the primacy not to the Jews but the Gentiles, saying: "They should be the first to come in, and then those of the Gentiles; but since they disbelieved, the order was reversed, and their unbelief and fall caused these to be brought in first. [...] they ought to have been first admitted, and then we. [...]. But as they had started off, we the last became first (οἱ δεύτεροι πρῶτοι γεγόναμεν)."[49]

As a consequence of the "debtor" status, the whole nations, including the Romans, were made partakers in all these spiritual things. They were debtors in their spiritual things, so they ought to serve them in material things. Chrysostom declared that Paul:

Says, "What? Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?" (1 Cor 14:36). […] And even with this alone he was not satisfied, but he adds, "they are debtors (ὀφειλέται εἰσίν)." Then he shows how they are debtors. For if, he says, "the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual things, they also ought to minister

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47   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom*. 30 (Field I, 463–464).
48   Josephus, *Antiq*. XX, 1.5; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* II, 3.8.12; Orosius, *Hist.* VII, 6.9; Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* I, 3. Cf. Gapp, "The Universal Famine," 258–265; Graham, "The Genesis," 58–73.
49   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom*. 19 (Field I, 332). Cf. Cohen, "The Mystery," 263–265.

unto them in material things." But what he means is this. It was for their sakes that Christ came (Matt 15:24). To them it was that all the promises were made, to them of the Jews (Rom 9:4–5; 11:26–32). Of them Christ came. Wherefore also it said, "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). From them were the Apostles, from them the Prophets, from them all good things. In all these things then the world was made a partaker (ἐκοινώνησεν).[50]

Moreover, quoting the parable of Jesus about the great banquet (Matt 22:9) as if Paul was speaking to the Romans, Chrysostom asserted that they were also debtors since they were called to enter into the Kingdom of God and to take part in that banquet of salvation. While interpreting that verse, he declared:

> It proclaims beforehand both the casting out of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles. [...] Before the crucifixion, He said to them [the disciples], "Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:6) and after the crucifixion, [...] when on the point of ascending into heaven, He declared, "When the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).[51]

In other words, Paul reminded the Romans that they were made partakers in the banquet of salvation, which first was only prepared for the Jews, and they were brought in to enjoy the eschatological feast. For that reason, they were debtors and therefore ought to serve them in material things by means of almsgiving. Indeed, he stated: "If then, he says, you have been made partakers in that which is greater, and when it was for them that the banquet was prepared, you have been brought in to enjoy the feast that was spread (Matt 22:9), according to the Parable of the Gospel, you are debtors also to share your carnal things with them, and to impart to them."[52]

Sixth, continuing to dwell on verse 27 and focusing on the term λειτουργῆσαι, Chrysostom reveals very well an important aspect of giving alms: it is not merely to share (κοινωνῆσαι) material things with the poor but rather to serve (λειτουργῆσαι) them. The almsgivers were ranked as ministers (διάκονοι), that is, those who serve, and "those who pay the taxes to kings." A taxpayer does not lose money when he pays the taxes but gains more as these guarantee public service from the authorities considered as the ministers of God who used to manage these taxes, as he underlined in the other context of his homily:

> "For the same reason you also pay taxes," he says, "for they are ministers of God, attending to this very thing" (Rom 13:6). [...] Observe the wisdom and judgment of the blessed Paul.

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50 Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30 (Field I, 461, 462).
51 Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Matt.* 69, 1.
52 Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30.

For that which seemed to be burdensome and annoying – the system of imposts – this he turns into a proof of their care for men. What is the reason, he means, that we pay taxes to a king? Is it not as providing for us? And yet we should not have paid it unless we had known in the first instance that we were gainers from this superintendence.[53]

Thus, Chrysostom brought to light not only the importance of almsgiving for the beneficiaries but also for the almsgiver.[54] Just like those who pay taxes receive the benefits from this payment, those who give alms also benefit from doing it. He declared that "[Paul] does not say to share, but 'to minister' (λειτουργῆσαι), so ranking them with ministers (διακόνων), and those that pay the taxes to kings."[55] Later, while interpreting the term καρπός used by Paul in verse 28, Chrysostom underlined the benefits of doing alms again. For him, the fact that Paul calls alms καρπός reveals again that the almsgivers benefit from doing it.[56] Therefore, he declared, "'When therefore I have completed this, and have sealed unto them this fruit' [...] And he does not say alms (ἐλεημοσύνην), but 'fruit' (καρπόν) again, to show that those who gave it were gainers by it."[57]

Seventh, paying attention to the expression of Paul, "For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings" (Rom 15:27), Chrysostom noted and further clarified Paul's different vocabulary referring to carnal and spiritual things. For spiritual things, he adds a possessive pronoun αὐτός (their) and says, "ἐν τοῖς πνευματικοῖς αὐτῶν." On the contrary to carnal things, he does not say "ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς ὑμῶν," but merely "ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς," without any possessive pronoun. Based on those different expressions, Chrysostom was able to ground another argument about the importance of alms. He used the fact that Paul does not add any possessive pronoun for material things as the ground to declare that material things are not private property but common to all. Chrysostom also underlined that material wealth is not personal possession but must be available and common to all in other contexts of his homilies.[58] Moreover, other ancient Christian writers, such as Clement of Alexandria, Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome, also confirmed that material things are common to all. However, they did not reject private property or at least did not condemn individual ownership to be against the natural law.[59]

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53   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom*. 23.
54   Leyerle, "John Chrysostom on Almsgiving," 29–47; Sitzler, "The Indigent," 468–479; Meyer, *John Chrysostom*, 88–101.
55   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom*. 30 (Field I, 462).
56   BDAG, "καρπός," 509–510.
57   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom*. 30 (Field I, 462).
58   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Stat*. 2, 19; Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 1 Tim*. 11; 12; Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 1 Cor*. 10, 7; Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Eleem*. 10, 25.
59   Avila, *Ownership*, 33–170.

Chrysostom, then, gave money as an example by saying that it belongs to all, not only to its possessors. However, he further stated that reality shows that money and other possessions are not common, i.e., some people are rich and others poor. Therefore, through alms, the wealthy have a responsibility and an obligation to share their money and goods with those in need. Thus, they belong to all, not only to their possessors. In other words, almsgiving is a way to make money, and other goods, which previously were not common and equal for all, become available to all. Chrysostom further declared: "[Paul] does not say in your carnal things (ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς ὑμῶν), as he did in 'their spiritual things' (ἐν τοῖς πνευματικοῖς αὐτῶν). For the spiritual things were theirs. But the material things belonged not to these alone, but were the common property of all. For he bade money to be held to belong to all, not to those who were its possessors only."[60]

Moreover, in the other context of his homily, Chrysostom distinguished two levels of material things. Where one is:

The greater and more necessary blessings and those which maintain our life" such as the sunbeams and the air "that God has made common." The other is "the smaller and less valuable – I speak of money – are not thus common [...] In order that our life might be disciplined, and that we might have a training ground for virtue. [...] If money was also a universal possession and were offered in the same manner to all, the occasion for almsgiving, and the opportunity for benevolence, would be taken away. [...] He has made you rich that you may assist the needy; that you may have a release of your own sins, by liberality to others."[61]

Eighth, arriving at verse 29, "And I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ," Chrysostom dwelt on Paul's other vocabulary referring to alms, i.e., εὐλογία. He then clarified it by quoting another Paul's expression in 2 Cor 9:5, "So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren to go on before unto you, and arrange in advance for your previously promised gift, so that it may be ready as a blessing (εὐλογίαν) and not as an exaction," asserting that "Blessing is a name he very commonly gives to alms. As when he says, 'As a blessing and not as an exaction' (2 Cor 9:5). And it was customary of old for the thing to be so called."[62]

In general, the Greek word εὐλογία means "praise" and "blessing." However, "since the concept of blessing connotes the idea of bounty, εὐλογία also means *generous gift, bounty*."[63] It was observed that ancient writers, such as Philo, in an exposition

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60   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30 (Field I, 462).
61   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Stat.* 2, 19–20.
62   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30 (Field I, 463).
63   BDAG, "εὐλογία," 408–409.

on the "blessing" of Abraham, and also Paul, in this passage quoted here by Chrysostom, used both significations.[64] For that reason, Chrysostom declared that it is an old custom for alms to be called εὐλογία as it was known originally as a willing gift or a bounty.

2.3. Praise as Encouragement

Going back to verse 29, Chrysostom explained another of Paul's ways of actively exhorting the Romans to participate in almsgiving. Moreover, he interpreted Paul's expression in that verse: "As if [he] had said, 'I know that when I come I shall find you with the honor and freshness of all good deeds about you, and worthy of countless praises in the Gospel.' And this is a wonderful form of counsel, that is, holding beforehand their attention by encomiums. For, when he entreats them in the way of advice, this is the mode of setting them right that he adopts."[65]

It should be noted that Chrysostom interpreted this expression of Paul not only as a sign of hope that he would come to them and should find in them "the honor and freshness of all good deeds" and "countless praises in the Gospel" but also as a form of encomium by which Paul holds beforehand their attention for almsgiving. Chrysostom believed that "this was a wonderful form of counsel" used by Paul to make the Romans more zealous about their alms. In fact, according to the study of Laurent Pernot, the encomium conveys a message of exhortation and advice. He observed that the ancient writers, such as Aristotle and Quintilian, note that principally there is a similarity between praise and advice: one is often advised to seek out for the future the very same that are praised in those who already have them.[66] Moreover, Pernot also asserted that praise is often used in support of advice: the speech is principally a request, but it uses the form of praise to make the listener yield to the request. For example, Isocrates offers an encomium of Athens in order to support the city's request for hegemony.[67] On the contrary, advice may appear in the extension of praise: the speech is principally an encomium but begins with a request or entreaties. An encomium, therefore, is not a simple matter of insincere praise but intelligent persuasion. Behind sweet words of praise, the listeners are invited to embody the aspects earnestly they are praised.[68] In this case, Paul's encomium to the Romans for their "all good deeds" and their "worthy of countless praises in the Gospel" means advice and exhortation for them to be earnest in good deeds to be worthy to receive such praise.

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64   Philo, *Migr.*, 13, 70–73 (LCL 261, 170–173). Cf. Safrai – Tomson, "Paul's Collection," 147.
65   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom*. 30 (Field I, 463).
66   Aristoteles, *Rhet*. I, 9, 35; Quintilianus, *Inst*. III, 7, 28 (LCL 124, 479).
67   Isocrates, *Paneg*. (LCL 209, 116–241).
68   Pernot, *Epideictic Rhetoric*, 93–94; Pepe, "(Re)discovering a Rhetorical Genre," 17–31; Ware, "Panegyric," 291–304.

2.4. Almsgiving as Sacrifice

Interpreting verses 30 and 31, in which Paul asks the Romans to pray for him (Rom 15:30) so that the saints would accept his ministry, Chrysostom clarifies three important things. First, he identifies the service (διακονία) to the saints with the sacrifice (θυσία).[69] Second, Paul's statement described, "That my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints" (Rom 15:31b) as, "my sacrifice may be accepted, with cheerfulness they may receive what is given them."[70]

Identifying Paul's ministry to the saints as the sacrifice shows a great probability that Chrysostom intentionally placed the collection or the contribution of the Macedonians and the Achaeans in the context of the liturgy. For Chrysostom and the other ecclesiastical writers, the term "sacrifice," in addition to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and in the Eucharist, also refers to the offering of charity that Christians bring as their participation in the Eucharistic sacrifice.[71] Paul himself also places the collection "on the first day of every week" (1 Cor 16:2), and while interpreting this verse, Chrysostom clarified:

"What then, I ask, did you give order about?" 'On the first day of the week,' that is, the Lord's day (Κυριακήν) 'let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper' (1 Cor 16:2). Mark how he exhorts them even from the time: for indeed the day was enough to lead them to almsgiving. Wherefore 'call to mind,' he says, 'what you attained to on this day: how all the unutterable blessings, and that which is the root and the beginning of our life took place on this day.'[72]

Moreover, in his ecclesiological doctrine, Chrysostom declared that the Church is one body with many and various members, including the poor who, for Chrysostom, have a particular place and role in the Church. They are "the very members of Christ and the body of the Lord," who constitute the most worthy part of the so-called "third altar."[73] The first altar is Christ's sacrifice culminated in His cross and resurrection. This altar "is refracted, as it were, into two closely altars," namely the stone altar and the ecclesial living-body altar.[74] The stone altar, which is the second altar, is the Eucharist altar, in which the memorial of Christ's sacrifice on the cross is celebrated. This celebration creates the ecclesial body of Christ, which is the third altar. For Chrysostom, the poor are the most sacred and worthy part of the third altar, in which the same sacrifice of Christ celebrated on the second altar must also be observed there. For that reason, the third altar can be identified with the altar of the poor,

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69   BDAG, "θυσία," 462.
70   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30 (Field I, 464).
71   Young, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas*, 97–138.
72   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 2 Cor.* 43, 2 (Field II, 535–536).
73   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 2 Cor.* 20, 3.
74   Tillard, *Flesh of the Church*, 69.

on which Christ must be served and honored with the "good deeds (εὐποΐαι) and generosities (κοινωνίες), for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."[75]

Second, while identifying the service to the saints with a sacrifice, Chrysostom also revealed Paul's profound and great appreciation for the recipients of his ministry. As previously shown that "the poor among the saints" (Rom 15:26) were the beneficiaries of this service, Chrysostom further illustrated that Paul has exalted them on the level of "both that from their virtue and that from their poverty."[76] Now, showing his need for the community's prayer for the positive response to the collection that Paul was going to hand over to them, Chrysostom emphasized that Paul carefully exalted again the dignity of those who will receive it, saying, "See how he again exalts the dignity of those who were to receive it. Then he asks for the prayer of so great a people in order to what was sent being received."[77]

Third, as a consequence of identifying almsgiving with sacrifice, Chrysostom had to explicate the acceptable and fruitful almsgiving criteria. Previously, while elucidating the expression of Paul as regards the terms λειτουργῆσαι and καρπόν, he discussed the benefits of alms for the givers. Now, he clarified that not all alms are safe to be accepted and could bring advantages for the almsgiver, underlining that Paul, "By this, he shows also another point, that to have given alms does not secure it being accepted. For when anyone gives it constrainedly, or out of unjust gains, or for vanity, the fruit of it is gone."[78]

Notably, for Chrysostom, there are more conditions for alms to become an acceptable and fruitful sacrifice, which brings benefits for the almsgiver. At this point, let us point out three conditions for good almsgiving, more often emphasized by Chrysostom. First, it must be given unconstrainedly, that is, as a willing gift, as he also asserted in the other context of his homily, saying, "Our alms being judged not by the measure of our gifts, but by the largeness of our mind."[79] It means someone who gives alms must have a good disposition so that he gives not reluctantly or under compulsion but gives freely and with a cheerful heart (2 Cor 9:1.7), as he underlined, "I mean cheerful is intended as generous. However, [Paul] has taken it as giving with readiness. Since the example of the Macedonians and all those other things were enough to produce sumptuousness, he does not say many things on that, except about giving without reluctance."[80]

Second, what is given for alms, money, and other material goods must be gained justly, not the fruit of injustice. For example, in the other context of his homily, Chrysostom stated, "Let us make a little chest for the poor at home; [...] let nothing

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[75]   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Matt.* 50, 4.
[76]   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 2 Cor.* 20, 2.
[77]   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30 (Field I, 464).
[78]   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Rom.* 30 (Field I, 464).
[79]   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Matt.* 52, 4.
[80]   Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 2 Cor.* 19, 2.

be cast into it, which is the fruit of injustice. For this is charity, and it cannot be that the charity should ever spring out of hardheartedness."[81] Then, "Do not put a slander on almsgiving. Do not cause it to be evil spoken of by all. If you commit robbery for this, that you may give alms, nothing is more wicked than your almsgiving. For when it is produced by rapine, it is not almsgiving, it is inhumanity, it is cruelty, it is an insult to God."[82]

Third, the intention of giving alms is not for vainglory because it is very dangerous, damaging the good deeds and eliminating its reward, as he asserted in another context of his homilies as follows:

> Let us flee vainglory, for this passion is more despotic than all the others. [...] If we cut off this passion, we shall destroy the other limbs of the evil as well, [...] even insinuates itself into the virtues; and when it is not able to dislodge us from there it wrecks much damage on our very virtue, forcing us to perform virtuous acts and depriving us of their fruits. For he who looks to vainglory, whether fasting or praying or giving alms, loses the reward of the good action. [...] Therefore, if we wish to attain to glory, let us flee from the praise of men and desire only that coming from God.[83]

Vainglory again damages tens of thousands of good deeds, and near this too again the rich man hath his dwelling.[84]

Conclusions

For Chrysostom, Rom 15:25–32, in which Paul recounts his planning to go to Jerusalem to hand over the money collected by the Macedonians and the Achaean, is nothing but the discourse concerning almsgiving (ἐλεημοσύνη) and good deeds in general. First of all, he discusses the historical aspect of the collection that was about to be delivered to the saints in Jerusalem and clarifies Paul's reason for delaying his visit to Rome. Then, he brings to light Paul's exhortation for alms and other good deeds to the Romans, paying attention, especially to his style of speaking, expressions, and vocabulary, showing the ways of Paul in encouraging them to become more earnest about it. Finally, identifying Paul's ministry to the saints as a sacrifice, Chrysostom was able to show, though briefly, the criteria of good and fruitful almsgiving.

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81 Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 1 Cor.* 43, 7.
82 Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 2 Tim.* 6.
83 Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. Jo.* 28.
84 Iohannes Chrysostomus, *Hom. 2 Cor.* 13, 4.

Regarding Paul's ways of encouraging the Romans to become more earnest in almsgiving, Chrysostom indicated four crucial things. First, realizing that "mankind is emulous" and "there is nothing so powerful as emulation," Chrysostom claimed that the apostle employed this way covertly. Chrysostom understands that, for Paul, the status of debtors in spiritual blessings is the main reason why the Romans have to be more zealous in almsgiving, imitating the Macedonians and the Achaeans pleased to serve the saints in Jerusalem in material things. Second, paying attention to and clarifying eight expressions of Paul, i.e., διακονῶν, εὐδόκησαν, κοινωνίαν (τινά), εἰς τοὺς πτωχοὺς τῶν ἁγίων, ὀφειλέται, λειτουργῆσαι and καρπός, ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς, and εὐλογίας, Chrysostom invited his congregation to "consider what dignity there is in his expressions" and showed that all of these expressions were nothing but his ways in encouraging the Romans to become more earnest in doing alms.

Third, Chrysostom saw that Paul also used encomiums, a powerful message of exhortation and advice to hold beforehand the Romans' attention for munificent almsgiving. Fourth, Chrysostom explained that almsgiving is a sacrifice (θυσία), which brings benefits for the almsgivers. However, he also clarified that not all alms are safe to be accepted and could bring benefits, underlining three criteria of acceptable and fruitful alms that must be: 1) given willingly and cheerfully; 2) bestowed from the just resources, and not as a fruit of injustice; 3) free from vainglory.

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REVIEWS

Adam Ryszard Sikora, *Patmos – wyspa św. Jana. Miejsca na Patmos związane z Apostołem znane z tradycji spisanych i ustnych* (Biblioteka Szkoły DABAR 3; Rzeszów: Bonus Liber 2022). Ss. 335. PLN 120. ISBN 978-83-66566-32-3

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Ojciec prof. dr hab. Adam Ryszard Sikora OFM jest uznanym polskim biblistą ze znaczącym dorobkiem naukowym, dydaktycznym i organizacyjnym, pracownikiem Zakładu Teologii Historycznej na Wydziale Teologicznym Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu. Autor znany jest ze swych tłumaczeń Biblii z hebrajskiego i greki na język kaszubski oraz badań nad *Corpus Johanneum*. Fascynacja Pismami Janowymi zaowocowała między innymi monografią dotyczącą autora czwartej Ewangelii: *„Zobaczył i uwierzył” (J 20,8). Droga wiary umiłowanego ucznia Jezusa w ujęciu egzegezy teologicznej* (Poznań: WT UAM 2012), oraz recenzowaną tu monografią dotyczącą wyspy Patmos, miejsca w którym Jan Apostoł miał doświadczyć ostatniego historycznie nowotestamentowego objawienia Boga, spisanego później na kartach Księgi Apokalipsy. Jest to pierwsza na polskim rynku wydawniczym tak obszerna i wieloaspektowa monografia dedykowana tej wyspie, znanej także jako „Święta wyspa świętego Morza Egejskiego”, „Jerozolima Morza Egejskiego”, „wyspa św. Jana”, „Wyspa Apokalipsy” czy w tradycji prawosławnej *Theovadistos* („ziemia, po której chodził Bóg”). W tej samej serii książkowej, Biblioteka Szkoły DABAR, ukazała się rok wcześniej pozycja A. Kubiś, *Patmos. Geografia, historia, apokryfy* (Rzeszów: Bonus Liber 2021), która jest jednak jedynie ogólnym wprowadzeniem w geografię i historię wyspy. Publikację monografii Adama Sikory należy zatem przywitać z radością, uznaniem i wdzięcznością, gdyż wypełnia ona poważną lukę w polskiej literaturze naukowej, a nawet – jak zaraz wykażemy – w światowej.

Recenzowana pozycja książkowa podzielona jest na pięć rozdziałów. Pierwszy dotyczy geograficznej charakterystyki wyspy, a zatem znaczenia jej nazwy, położenia na mapie Morza Egejskiego w archipelagu Dodekanezu, topografii, geologii, gospodarki wodnej, klimatu, fauny, flory (omówieniu większości roślin towarzyszą kolorowe fotografie!), ludności, gospodarki (głównie rolnictwa) (s. 17–48). Rozdział drugi opisuje dzieje Patmos przed przybyciem Jana Apostoła na wyspę. Autor prezentuje mity greckie związane z Patmos i dzieje wyspy od prehistorii do I w. po Chr. W przekonujący sposób polemizuje tutaj z opinią, że „starożytna Patmos nie ma żadnej

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historii" (Ludwig Ross) (s. 49–77). Wyspa była zamieszkiwana od 3000 r. przed Chr. i w czasach Jana nie była bynajmniej bezludną kolonią karną, ale wyspą-twierdzą zależną od pobliskiego Miletu. Istniały na niej świątynie (m.in. Artemidy), gimnazjon, hipodrom. Rozdział trzeci koncentruje się na kwestii zesłania Jana Apostoła na Patmos. Autor analizuje najpierw kwestię autorstwa Apokalipsy, opowiadając się za tradycyjną tezą, w świetle której jej autorem jest św. Jan Apostoł, umiłowany uczeń Jezusa. Sikora uznaje jednocześnie możliwy wpływ innych redaktorów na ostateczny kształt księgi (s. 80–87). Następnie przedstawia biblijny i patrystyczny portret Apostoła Jana (s. 87–93) oraz biblijne, patrystyczne, apokryficzne i ustne świadectwa, mówiące o zesłaniu św. Jana na wyspę Patmos (s. 94–115). Autor szczegółowo omówił jedno z najważniejszych świadectw apokryficznych – *Dzieje Jana pióra Prochora* – traktujących o pobycie apostoła na wyspie, zamieszczając także streszczenie tego dzieła (s. 115–125). Apokryf ten powstał prawdopodobnie w V w., stąd jego autora winniśmy nazwać nie tyle Prochorem (czyli jednym z siedmiu diakonów Kościoła w Jerozolimie, zob. Dz 6,5), co Pseudo-Prochorem. Nigdy nie przebywał on na Patmos, jednak swą relację oparł na informacjach uzyskanych od naocznych świadków, pielgrzymów i podróżników. Sikora opowiada się za tezą, że Jan przebywał na wyspie – w starożytności nigdy nie identyfikowanej jako miejsce zsyłek – jako banita, skazany przez lokalne władze w Milecie. Na wyspie cieszył się on swobodą poruszania się, co umożliwiło mu ewangelizowanie jej mieszkańców.

Najbardziej oryginalną częścią pracy jest rozdział czwarty. Eksploruje on relację między apokryfem *Dzieje Jana pióra Prochora* a realiami geograficznymi i historycznymi wyspy Patmos (s. 127–230) oraz relację tekstu Księgi Apokalipsy do religijnych i geograficznych realiów wyspy (s. 230–245). Pierwsza część tego rozdziału jest niezaprzeczalnym *novum* w literaturze światowej. Autor postawił przed sobą ambitne zadanie konfrontacji danych zawartych w apokryfie z wiedzą, jaką dostarczają o wyspie badania archeologiczne oraz źródła historyczne (m.in. dość obfita literatura podróżnicza, pielgrzymkowa i pamiętnikarska, lokalne publikacje i rękopisy), a także tradycje ustne, przekazywane z pokolenia na pokolenie wśród mieszkańców Patmos. Przedmiotem analizy stały się miejsca życia i ewangelizacji Jana Apostoła na wyspie. Sikora nie ograniczył się jednak tylko do miejsc wzmiankowanych w *Dziejach Jana pióra Prochora*, ale dodał do nich również te, o których mówi tradycja ustna i pisana (pozaapokryficzna). Na przeszło stu stronach, prezentując każde miejsce, autor wymienia ich nazwy, znane z tradycji (pisanej i/lub ustnej), nazwy współczesne, położenie (każdorazowo oznaczając to miejsce na mapie), źródła (m.in. tekst apokryfu we własnym przekładzie z języka greckiego), opis wydarzenia wiążącego św. Jana z danym miejscem i na końcu aktualny, współczesny opis tego miejsca na podstawie wyników prac archeologicznych oraz ewentualnego upamiętnienia tego miejsca przez wybudowanie kościoła lub umieszczenie tablicy informacyjnej. Sikora omawia zatem (1) Forę – dzisiejsze portowe miasteczko Skala; (2) Botrys, dzielnicę Fory (Βότρυς – „kiście winogron") – miejsce nauczania Jana,

jego konfrontacji z czarownikiem Kynopsem i dotkliwego podbicia apostoła przez zwolenników pogańskiego kapłana Kynopsa; (3) Lithou Bole (Λίθου Βολῆ – „rzut kamieniem") – miejsce pobicia św. Jana przez kapłanów Apollina oraz ostatecznej konfrontacji apostoła z Kynopsem, ginącym w wodach zatoki; (4) Rafę Kynopsa – miejsce śmierci czarownika Kynopsa; (5) *Stoa Dometia* („Kolumnada Domicjana") – miejsce nauczania św. Jana, uzdrowienia przez niego człowieka chromego i spotkania z wysłańcem namiestnika wyspy, proszącego o pomoc dla żony namiestnika; (6) Tychios – miejsce uzdrowienia przez św. Jana sparaliżowanego obcokrajowca; (7) Proklos – miejsce nawrócenia Żyda Karosa; (8) Fokas – miejsce głoszenia Ewangelii przez św. Jana; (9) wzgórze Kaminakia (od gr. „kominy") – miejsca zbudowania kaplicy przez św. Jana; (10) Sykamia („miejsce, gdzie rosną sykomory") – miejsce nauczania i udzielania chrztu przez Jana (dziś wznosi się tam ocieniony palmami kościółek); (11) Piasterion („dzielnica gołębi") zlokalizowana w Myrinuza (Μυρρινοῦσα – nazwa pochodząca od słowa „mirt"), według apokryfu „małym mieście" – miejsce wypędzenia złego ducha Lykosa i uratowania przez św. Jana dwunastu chłopców, mających być złożonymi w ofierze Lykasowi, a także miejsce nauczania Jana i wskrzeszenia przez niego syna jednego z kapłanów Zeusa; (12) Flogios („płomień") w Myrinuza – miejsce wypędzenia złego ducha z dziecka pewnej kobiety i miejsce udzielania chrztu; (13) miejsce w pobliżu Flogios, gdzie stała świątynia Dionizosa – miejsce zburzenia przez św. Jana świątyni Dionizosa i śmierci kapłanów Dionizosa (*nota bene* odkryto w tym miejscu głowę ze statuy Dionizosa, którą można dziś oglądać w muzeum klasztornym) oraz miejsce nawrócenia czarownika Noetiana; (14) Karos – miejsce chrztu Żyda Faustusa i jego rodziny, a także miejsce nawrócenia i przyjęcia chrztu przez namiestnika wyspy Makrinosa oraz Proklianę i jej syna Sosipatrosa; (15) Agroikia (Grikos) – miejsce nauczania św. Jana oraz miejsce zamieszkania ubogiej wdowy, której syna w Forze-Tychios apostoł uwolnił od złego ducha; (16) Kallikatsou – skała, w pobliżu której św. Jan miał przybić do brzegów Patmos, a po odwołaniu z zesłania, odpłynąć do Efezu (w tym miejscu św. Jan miał też wybudować kaplicę ku czci Matki Bożej); (17) Psili Ammos – miejsce, z którego św. Jan miał zobaczyć bestię wychodzącą z morza (zob. Ap 13,1 – bestię tę, gr. θηρίον lub θήρ, identyfikuje się niekiedy z erupcją wulkaniczną na wyspie Thera, gr. θήρα, nazywaną dziś Santorini); (18) Jaskinia Kynopsa – miejsce zamieszkiwania czarownika Kynopsa („człowiek o twarzy psa"; dziś znajduje się tam kaplica pw. św. Jana z Groty); (19) Grota Apokalipsy (Katastais) – miejsce otrzymania wizji przez św. Jana (dziś wznosi się tam klasztor, „najświętsze miejsce na wyspie, duchowe źródło chrzcielne" – Nikos Melianos). Warto podkreślić, że przeważająca część badaczy apokryfu *Dzieje Jana pióra Prochora* wypowiada się sceptycznie na temat możliwości realnego istnienia powyżej wspomnianych miejsc i autentyczności ich nazw. Sikora wykazał się zatem odwagą i naukową dociekliwością, podejmując tak pionierskie i trudne zadanie konfrontacji tekstu apokryfu z aktualną wiedzą historyczną i archeologiczną o Patmos. Rezultatem badań autora jest oryginalne

studium, łączące lekturę mało znanego apokryfu z fachową wiedzą na temat geografii i historii Patmos.

Drugą niezwykle cenną częścią czwartego rozdziału recenzowanej monografii jest analiza relacji pomiędzy tekstem Księgi Apokalipsy a wyspą Patmos. Wielu badaczy księgi już od dawna koncentrowało się na realiach historycznych, religijno-kulturowych i geograficznych Azji Mniejszej, a zwłaszcza siedmiu miast wzmiankowanych w Ap 2–3. Takie „czytanie Apokalipsy pośród ruin" (Steven Friesen), niezwykle owocne w okryciu duchowego i teologicznego przesłania księgi, Adam Sikora zastosował w swej analizie nawiązań – mniej lub bardziej wyraźnych – do rzeczywistości geograficzno-topograficznej oraz historyczno-religijnej Patmos. W książce znajdziemy zatem szczegółową analizę realiów religijnych i geograficznych Patmos w powiązaniu z tekstem Apokalipsy (s. 236–245), poprzedzoną prezentacją starożytnych (patrystycznych) i wczesnośredniowiecznych (do X w.) świadectw dotyczących miejsca spisania księgi (s. 230–236). Jak wynika ze studium Sikory, od II w. istnieją świadectwa o napisaniu Apokalipsy na Patmos, choć wskazuje się także inne lokalizacje (np. Efez). Najstarsza tradycja identyfikująca miejsce napisania księgi z Grotą Apokalipsy (Katastais), znajdującą się na Patmos, sięga dopiero IX w.

Rozdział czwarty zamyka podrozdział: „Refleksja teologiczna: Duchowa wędrówka od miejsc do osoby" (s. 246–252). Książka bowiem, w zamierzeniu autora, winna się przyczynić nie tylko do poznania miejsca, ale także do spotkania osoby Jana Apostoła, a także samej Osoby Boga. Autor, jako motto całego rozdziału, cytuje znamienne w tym kontekście słowa Jana Pawła II: „Przestrzeń może przechowywać znaki nadzwyczajnych interwencji Boga". We wprowadzeniu czytamy: „Ufam, że poznawanie miejsc związanych z obecnością św. Jana na Patmos, choć przez lekturę tej książki, pozwoli odbyć duchową podróż, będącą także, przynajmniej w pewnym stopniu partycypacją w doświadczeniu samego Apostoła" (s. 16). Patmos w istocie z nieprzyjaznej wyspy zsyłki i kary stało się w świadomości chrześcijan miejscem świętym, Drugą Jerozolimą, Jerozolimą świętego morza, miejscem objawienia się Boga. Wyspa jest dziś ważnym miejscem na mapie „geografii zbawienia", miejscem, które udziela trwałego wsparcia wierze (Paweł VI, *Nobis in animo*). W zakończeniu tego rozdziału Adam Sikora stwierdza: „Miejsca Janowe na Patmos nie zatrzymują uwagi na sobie, nie porywają swoją nadzwyczajnością czy pięknem, nie narzucają się swoją pasjonującą historią czy upamiętniającą je architekturą, ale odsyłają do Tego, który z tej wyspy jeszcze raz ukazał chrześcijanom najgłębszy sens ich ziemskiej wędrówki i cel, do którego mają dążyć – niebo. Do nawiedzających te miejsca należy decyzja o przejściu od tych miejsc do doświadczeń osobistych spotkań z Bogiem" (s. 252).

Monografię zamyka rozdział piąty, dotyczący pojanowych dziejów Patmos (s. 253–231). Z niezwykłą kompetencją Sikora opisał losy wyspy naznaczone rajdami piratów, fundacją klasztoru Jana Teologa przez św. Chrystodulosa w 1088 r. (mnisi tego klasztoru byli wyłącznymi właścicielami wyspy do 1730 r.), wojnami i bitwami

morskimi między muzułmanami (później głównie Turkami) a krajami chrześcijańskiego Zachodu, upadkiem Konstantynopola (1453 r.) i podbojem Krety (1666 r.), rozwojem i upadkiem kupiectwa, założeniem Patmiady („Uniwersytetu Archipelagu") w 1713 r., ruchami niepodległościowymi skierowanymi przeciwko okupacji tureckiej, powiększaniem zasobów biblioteki klasztornej (nad wejściem do niej widnieje wymowny napis „Sanatorium duszy"), odzyskaniem niepodległości przez Grecję, okupacją włoską (1912–1943) i wreszcie przyłączeniem wyspy wraz z całym Dodekanezem do państwa greckiego w 1946 r. Zapoznając się z treścią tego rozdziału, tak jak i rozdziałów poprzednich, czytelnik utwierdza się w przekonaniu, iż ma przed sobą prawdziwe kompendium specjalistycznej i rzetelnej wiedzy na temat Egejskiej Jerozolimy.

Monografia kończy się podsumowaniem, zbierającym syntetycznie wyniki badań (s. 303–308), streszczeniem w języku angielskim (s. 309–311) i włoskim (s. 312–313), obszerną bibliografią (s. 315–320) oraz indeksami: źródeł (s. 321–324), osób (s. 325–331) i miejsc geograficznych (s. 332–335). Warto podkreślić walory graficzne książki. Liczne, precyzyjne i starannie wykonane mapy pozwalają łatwo zlokalizować wszystkie wzmiankowane w apokryfie miejsca, w których miał przebywać Jan Apostoł w czasie swego pobytu na wyspie. Ponad 160 wysokiej jakości kolorowych fotografii przenosi czytelnika w świat egejskiego błękitu, czyli styku lazuru nieba i szafirowych fal morza, na tle którego Patmos jawi się jako urzekająca feeria kolorów skał, plaż, łąk, lasów, domostw oraz 365 (!) kaplic, kościołów i klasztorów. Stare zdjęcia, niektóre sprzed 100 lat, nadto ryciny z XVIII i XIX w., ożywiają kreowany przez wyobraźnię czytelnika krajobraz i historię wyspy oraz życie dawnych jej mieszkańców. Książka ubogacona jest także wieloma rysunkami i szkicami Kingi Sibilskiej i Macieja Tamkuna, przedstawiającymi zarówno starożytne artefakty, jak i epizody z życia św. Jana opowiedziane na kartach apokryfu. Naukowa monografia nabrała cech albumu.

Wszechstronność i precyzja zawartych w książce analiz budzi niekłamany podziw oraz wdzięczność za wieloletnią pracę autora. Monografia jest owocem drobiazgowej kwerendy prowadzonej w wielu bibliotekach świata (także w słynnej bibliotece Monastyru Jana Teologa na Patmos), kilku podróży i pobytów na wyspie, żmudnego zbierania ustnych świadectw jej mieszkańców. Obcując z tekstem książki, czytelnik nie ma wątpliwości, że została ona napisana nie tyko przez erudytę, ale przede wszystkim przez miłośnika Apokalipsy i Jana Apostoła oraz wielkiego pasjonata wyspy. Zachęcając do lektury książki, można tylko życzyć, aby owa miłość i pasja udzieliła się jej czytelnikom, aby nastąpiło oczekiwane przez autora przejście od „miejsca" do „Osoby".