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Orthodoxy versus Phyletism. A Solution for a Balanced Experience of Romanianism in Orthodoxy

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Abstract

This study deals with the delicate phenomenon of phyletism within ecumenical Orthodoxy. Phyletism, emphasizing only the particularism of living in Orthodoxy, confuses the inheritance of a nation with the values of Orthodoxy which have a universal openness and thus loses both national identity and the pan-orthodox of faith. Their balanced interweaving consists in an honest living of Orthodoxy in one's own personal identity, in the memory of the nation into which one was ordained by God, during his generation, always open to the whole of Orthodoxy and lovingly sharing the fruits of the talents given by God and put into work according to one's personal choice.

Keywords:

Orthodoxy, person, phyletism, Romanianism, balanced, contemporary

I. Brief introduction to the topic

From the beginning, we affirm the fundamental point on which we support this approach: It is *Orthodoxy that makes Romania, and not Romania that makes Orthodoxy*. In other words, you can be a Romanian Orthodox, but Orthodoxy is not only Romanian. But let's not rush: Jesus was not born

in the Carpathians and we were baptized by a converted Jew, the apostle Andrew.

The expression which defines Romania as the “Garden of the Mother of God”, beyond its idyllic aspect, can easily become an idealistic and sentimentalist story that fits perfectly with the indolent consciences who believe with conviction that it is enough to be born a Romanian: you are in the right place; you are already in Paradise.

Reality contradicts us in a striking way. We do not resemble to the “Garden of the Mother of God” as a country, nor have we made it a paradise, and as Romanians we do not all seem to be sons of the Kingdom of God. Rather, what we observe is that many Romanians want the Garden and the Paradise, but without doing anything, without even agreeing with them or even being against them. Quite simply, because we were born Romanians, we want to be in paradise. A great temptation, but a heavy burden!

II. Distinct unity and unitary distinction. A clarification that is necessary

In order to categorically rid ourselves of the mentioned type of expression, it is enough to look into the Scripture, the unaltered mirror of Christian life, and we will find to the Holy Apostle Paul the most expressive text that underlines the destiny of Christianity in the world: “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3, 26-28). In a synthetic interpretation, Saint Paul tells us in a nutshell that social, cultural, national, sexual, religious differences are overcome in Christ, He cannot be claimed by anyone, nor in a particular way, neither contextually, nor communally, nor confessionally, nor nationally.

On the contrary, emphasizing differences and imposing them in the name of faith inevitably leads to separation, segregation, perversion and schism. The act of separation belongs not to God, nor to his sons, but to

the sons of the darkness, demons and those alike who, by definition, first tear themselves off from God and then tempt others to separation as well. However, what we in the data of the Revelation is that all creation is built on a unitary distinction and a distinct unity, and not on ontological hiatuses or existential intermittences. That is to say, all are in relation to all, in a qualitative and hierarchical interdependence according to the following model: the greater comes with love towards the lesser, and the lesser continually tends towards the greater. The emphasis on the difference, however, leads to individualism and hierarchization, this automatically generating the power struggle on which all the kingdoms of the world and all the patterns of tyranny, dictatorship or despotism are built, either because the difference is overemphasized and, hence, the struggle to impose on others, or through insatiable thirst for the gifts of others that you want at all costs, ignoring, ultimately, your own value and the One who gave it to you.

Conversely, the identity or unitary distinction values the Person: par excellence in an ontological and hierarchical relationship: the greater help the lesser by supporting them, and the lesser tend towards the greater as the basis of their fulfillment. This is why God is the Almighty, because, being the Greatest, He wants to become the lesser, out of unlimited love.

Therefore, God is the source and basis of all unitary creation, but he is also the rich diversity of creatures, as the One who is rich in achievements and accomplishments¹. This is what Saint Maximus the Confessor shows us, speaking of the fact that there is only one divine breath in all creation, compared to the system of our breathing at the rhythm of the heartbeat, the systole and the diastole:

“According to the benevolent maker and sustaining procession towards creatures, the one Reason (the Word) is many reasons, and according to the reference and the providence which turns

¹ “God, having made and brought everything into existence with infinite power, sustains them, collects them, encompasses them and gathers them together and to Himself by taking care of both the rational and the sensible. Keeping them around him, as cause, beginning and end, all that are distanced from each other by the only power of relationship to Him, as beginning”. Cf. Sfântul MAXIM MĂRTURISITORUL, *Mystagogia*, transl., pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, Bucharest, 2000, p. 13.

and guides the many towards the One, as towards their origin, or as towards the center of the lines starting from Him, which has their beginnings in Himself from before and gathers them all, the many reasons are One”².

That is, God goes forth to each creature, strengthening it in its own identity, and then gathers them all to Himself as their only source of existence.

III. Phyletism and Orthodoxy versus individual and person: a theological antagonism

Phyletism is precisely the opposite of this movement to extend divine goodness throughout creation. Etymologically³, it represents the principle according to which an autocephalous local church emphasizes the national or linguistic criterion⁴ to the detriment of *Kath’holon* = according to the whole⁵, the full meaning of the orthodoxy of the first centuries and

² *Ambigua*, 7e, translation, introduction, and notes by pr. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, București, 2006 p. 123.

³ ethnos = nation, phyletismos = tribalism.

⁴ We are referring to the conservative prejudices related to the mystical prestige of sacred trilingualism, according to which the liturgical languages would be only Greek, Latin and Slavonic.. Cf. Ioan I. Ică JR, *Canonul Ortodoxiei I: Canonul Apostolic al primelor veacuri*, Deisis/Stavropoleos Publishing House, Sibiu, 2008, p. 16.

⁵ According to reverend father Ioan Ică jr., this “whole” has two simultaneous and complementary meanings: intensive, qualitative and extensive, quantitative, geographical. According to the first meaning, the Church is “Catholic” because it holds in it the totality of revelation and salvation, the fullness of grace and truth and, in this sense, the “Catholic” Church is the true, orthodox Church, opposed to heterodox, heretical communities, which are constituted on selections: *haireseis*. And according to the second meaning, the “Catholic” Church is either the Church *of the whole world*, or a local Church in communion with this Church. It is the form of ecumenicity accepted as a modern meaning of the terms “Catholicity” and “Orthodoxy” of the first Christian centuries, identical and equally defining, without the subjectivation of these terms: Catholicism and Orthodoxy, which over time led to different and separate forms of living and understanding of Christianity and whose unity through ecumenism cannot be possible. Because of the confusion between these terms, the ultra-pleonasm Christian-Orthodox Church was used. For a proper meaning of the terms: “catholic”,

at all times. So, phyletism greatly inflates the particular to the detriment of the totality: I, my opinion, mine, me, us, only here, only with us and all forms of enslaved egoism. The opposite of phyletism is ideological communism, which cancels the particular/individual (person/individual) for the community/collective: all the same, no identity, no nuances, no talents/gifts, no property. All levelling, uniform.

Orthodoxy, however, does not fall within and does not fit into any of these extremes. On the contrary, it values the person as a solution against individualism and the relationship/community as a solution against collectivism and totalitarianisms of any kind.

The person as such is always in a relationship⁶. When he leaves the relationship, he abandons his ontological status as a person. In turn, the relationship is always hypostatic: an incessant gift-giving; an overflow of what is mine to make room for the other⁷. The person lives in others as in himself and lives in himself through others. But those who do not discover their hypostatic gifts/vocation will never be in an authentic relationship

“orthodox”, “ecumenical”, we indicate the terminological excursus of father deacon Ioan I. Ică Jr, from *Cuvânt înainte* to volume I to the *Canonul Ortodoxiei*, p. 6.

⁶ In addition to the almost inexhaustible semantics of meanings given by various dictionaries, mostly in the common register of the term and which refer to the idea of the role played by someone in society (See: the study of Cornelio FABRO, “Persona”, in: *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, IX (1952), pp. 1226-1228 as well as *Théo, Nouvelle encyclopedie catholique*, pp. 659, 718) there are also thinkers who, taking into account the etymology of the word *προσωπον*, find another original meaning of the term, namely that of report or relationship. Thus, the preposition *πρός* = *to, towards, in the direction*, together with the noun *ὄψις* = *look (ὄμμα), eye (ὀφθαλμός), appearance, image and face (ὄψις)* form the compound concept *πρός-ὄπ-ον* = *I have my gaze, my face directed towards someone or something, I am face to face with someone or something*. Cf. Christos YANNARAS, *Persoană și Eros*, transl., Zenaida Luca, published with the blessing of IPS Nicolae, Mitropolitul Banatului, Introduction by Mihai Șora, Anastasia Publishing House, București, 2000 p. 21.

⁷ The person is hungry for communication, because she is hungry for *relationship*. She lives simultaneously in two registers: in herself and in the relationship, that is, in the relationships with others. The life lived in itself is in a permanent interference with others, and the relationships with others interfere with each other. One person’s words and deeds are spoken and done for another person. Outside of the relationship, the person is not a person. The relationship is what defines it. See: Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, Omniscop Publishing House, Craiova, 1943. pp. 199-200 and Dumitru STĂNILOAE., “Dumnezeu este iubire”, in: *Ortodoxia*, XXIII (1971) 3, p. 366.

with themselves, with others, with creation, or with God. The hypostatic gift or vocation (own distinction) is precisely the Authentic Place where man meets his true Self, God and others. Therefore, only by discovering our own identity can we have healthy relationships.

Also, the Relationship is not something distinct from the person, something that can exist by itself. The relationship is always tied to the person who initiates it. It exists only if the person exists, and persons, by their very existence, value the relationship. So we know from Saint Gregory of Nazianzus that the name of a person is not a proper name of God⁸, nor is the name of a being, nor the name of a work, but a *relationship* name of, showing in what relation a Person is to Another in divinity⁹.

The parody of the person is the individual, the one who divides the unity of nature for his own affirmation. He has no identity. He artificially constructs an identity for himself, from scraps or “pieces” stolen from other identities that he copies and imitates without any coherence¹⁰. That is why most individuals who choose to reduce themselves to individualism are identified with multiple identities. Also, the parody of the relationship is the crowd, the favorite place of individuals. Stupid, amorphous, levelling, suffocating, the crowd is based only on the massive summation of numbers of individuals, not on the interaction of the gifts of individuals. The crowd is a gathering, a conglomeration of individuals who switch their identity from one to another, in order to quench their identity abyss, to which they willfully relinquish.

The person, however, works with the Truth in which he continuously structures himself and from which he sets Love in motion. It is not how

⁸ God is a Person, but the person is not God, for there is no name in heaven and on earth that can express the unspoken and incomprehensible of the divinity. It must be understood that any concept/word in relation to God is conventional and always on the limit. Otherwise, we idolize words/concepts, putting them in the place of God.

⁹ *Cuvântarea* 3, 16, PG 35, 76A and *A treia cuvântare Teologică*, 29, 16, transl. Pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Anastasia Publishing House, București, 1993, pp. 47-48.

¹⁰ Louis DUMONT, *Eseu asupra individualismului. O perspectivă antropologică asupra ideologiei moderne*, transl. Luiza și Laurențiu Ștefan-Scalat, Anastasia Publishing House, București, 1996, 310 pp. and LEE, W. N. and S. M. CHOI, “The role of horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism in online customers’ responses toward persuasive communication on the Web”, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* (2005), no. 11 (1), pp. 317–336.

many people are in a relationship that matters to people, but what is the quality the relationship between them. Therefore, there is neither person nor relationship beyond Truth and Love. On the other hand, the individual works with the truth of others, with their beliefs, so with more truths. And more truths equal no truths. That is why the individual militates for the largest possible crowd, formulating his conviction that a lie believed by as many as possible can become the truth. A logical and ontological aporia!

Man is built by God as a person in relationship, according the image of the Trinitarian Persons, in order to put to work the intimate trinitarian matrix created-uncreated: God-man-woman and, together, to reiterate, in the created version, the communion of Love of the Trinity extended in humanity and in all creation¹¹. Sin, however, affects precisely the relationship between people. It is a threefold damage: man's relationship with God; the relationship between people and the relationship of man with creation¹². It is a switch on the path of growth: of beings into man

¹¹ Saint MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR speaking of the triad of existence: existence, good existence and eternal existence, associates them with the image and likeness of man: Cf. *Ambigua* 168, translation, introduction and notes, pr. prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, București, 2006, p. 507. This triad reflects to a certain extent the divine Trinity, so that we find in Saint Maximus, and not only, indications of the existence of an *imago Trinitatis* related to the structure and spiritual work of man, but he does not insist on them too much, probably in order not to understand that the mystery of the Holy Trinity is somehow expressible in human terms. Detailed at: Lars THUNBERG, *Antropologia teologică a Sfântului Maxim Mărturisitorul. Microcosmos și Mediator*, transl. Anca Popescu, Sofia Publishing House, București, 2005, pp. 148-151. In fact, our salvation means living in the Holy Trinity or *trinification*, that is, in-God-mankind, after Saint Justin POPOVICI, *Biserica Ortodoxă și Ecumenismul*, translation from Serbian, Adriana Tănăsescu, Mănăstirea Sfinții Arhangheli, Petru-Vodă, 2002, pp. 14; 51-52.

¹² Father Ghelasie GHEORGHE speaks of a Triple Fall from Heaven through which man damaged his original structure, of the Triadic soul: Self, Ghost, Spirit, Language. These are also manifested in the subconscious of the Soul, as forgetfulness, which means the direct impact of the consciousness of the Self, then as Movement, that is, the direct impact of the Spirit of Soul Memory, and as a lack of Recognition, that is, the direct impact of the Language of the Spirit of the Soul. Three disease systems result from these: of Consciousness-Personality; Memory Movement diseases: as inability to communion-dialogue with others, isolation and closing in on oneself, which confirms a mental illness of the soul and Language diseases: as a complex of opposition, of non-recognition and lack of communication, that disinformation of

and of man into God, which, switched, translates into man's abandonment of God, living at the expense of beings, and beings at the expense of the earth¹³.

The distortion of the relationship can be seen in the Scripture immediately after the fall when Adam and Eve do not want to discuss honestly with God (Gen 3, 8-12), then amplified in the entire history of the genealogy of death: the relationship between Adam and Eve, between them and their children (almost non-existent: Gen 4); the relationship between Cain and Abel (fratricide: Gen 4, 1-15); the escalation of the distortion of the relationship at the flood (the giants destroy creation: Gen 6, 1-8); the audacity of the plot of the crowd against God at the Tower of Babel (degenerate relationships: Gen 11, 1-9) and the climax of the distortion of the relationship in Judas (Lk 22, 3-6) and the Antichrist (I John 2, 18-23). God's solution is the emergence of families and nations around God: natural divisions of exercise for the discovery of the person. As an example, Noah is a person according to God's will (Genesis 6, 8); Abraham is a family according to God's liking (Gen 22, 1-12) and Israel a people after God's heart (Is 4, 22-23). Unfortunately, they all failed in their offspring.

The New Adam, however, comes to restore the person, the family and the nations. Christ, the New Adam, and the Mother of God, the New Eve are the image of the hypostatic restoration from top to bottom and

the soul that breaks the connection with the Ego-Consciousness, to the inverted and erroneous, confused subconscious. Cf. *Taina Vindecării. Medicina Isihastă*, Platytera Publishing House, București, 2017, pp. 131-132, sq.

¹³ This route is detailed by Saint Maximus the Confessor in the well-known theory of the five distinctions to which five unifications correspond simultaneously. The five distinctions are: 1) created -uncreated; 2) the created in: intelligible-sensible; 3) the sensible is divided into: heaven and earth; 4) the earth in: heaven and the inhabited world; 5) man is the one who mediates over all extremities, being: man and woman. Man is the connecting link of the distinct, between them and then between them and God, through himself. The five unifications are: 1) male-female in man; 2) heaven and the created world, in one earth; 3) heaven and earth, identity by virtue with the angels as much as is possible for man; 4) the intelligible and the sensible by equality with the angels in knowledge, making the whole creation one single creation; 5) the nature created with the uncreated through love, the target of its movement and man's searches, acquiring through grace all that God has by being, arriving at an ever-moving rest. Cf. Maxim MĂRTURISITORUL, *Ambigua* 106, pp. 388-389.

from bottom to top: Christ, God who descends the lowest, and Mother of God, man who ascends the highest. Then, the twelve Apostles are the symbol of the restoration of the people of Israel, and the 70 (72) disciples are the symbol of the restoration of all peoples. The descent of the Holy Spirit is Babylon reversed, which shows that if at the Tower of Babel the Gentiles appeared as a means of salvation against human audacity to face God¹⁴, at Pentecost – the feast of the nations for the Jews – the Holy Spirit, through the Apostles speaking in new languages (Acts 2, 3-4), gives us a sign of the recovery of the meanings of communicating with God and that all peoples are called to speak the Language of the Spirit. That is, all peoples are called around Christ in one language of essential meanings: the Language of the Spirit, of Truth-Love, with one King, with a diverse kingdom: Unity in Distinction and Distinction in Unity, the aim of Life on earth of God in Jesus Christ and the specific program of the four Gospels¹⁵.

IV. We are fruitful in our own identity with cosmic openness

Every person is called by God to bear fruit in a certain identity (man or woman), with a certain vocation (natural gift/talent), in a certain family

¹⁴ Originally, the Hebrew Babel (**Bāb-ili**) means “ the gate of God”. Through a popular etymology, it becomes **bālal** = to mix, entangle, cause confusion. The sanctioning of human pride to pierce the sky (God’s dwelling) with one’s own powers, leads to the moment of the beginning of the history of languages, but also of mentalities because, when two people do not understand each other, it means that “they do not speak the same language”, i.e., they think differently. Cf. *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură* – ediția Jubiliară a Sfântului Sinod, diortosită după Septuaginta de Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania, Arhiepiscopul Clujului, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, București, 2001, Book of Genesis, chapter 11, *letters g, h,*, p. 32.

¹⁵ The excellent syntheses of the professor, former Anglican bishop Nicholas Tomas WRIGHT come to recover the forgotten story of the Gospels, the one through which everything Jesus does and says is to show that God comes in Christ to make this world the Kingdom of God and from men to make its sons. Therefore, the Kingdom of God is not an idyllic reality, postponed after death, but a reality expected by the Jews, established by Christ, extended through Christians and continued in the eschaton. See: *Iisus pur și simplu. O nouă viziune despre cine a fost, ce a făcut și de ce contează*, transl. diac. Ioan I. Ică jr, Deisis Publishing House, Sibiu, 2015, 319 pp. and *Cum a devenit Dumnezeu Împărat. Povestea uitată a Evangheliilor*, transl. diac. Ioan I. Ică jr, Deisis Publishing House, Sibiu, 2015, 313 pp.

(man and woman), in a certain nation, for a certain time, everything lived in interdependence and with universal, cosmic, eternal openness. No one can bear fruit and fulfill himself if he traumatizes his identity, if he inhibits his vocation, if he denies his parents, if he abandons his country/nation or if he shortens his days; unless he has the direct call of God like Abraham, like Joseph, like Moses, like the martyrs, etc. God is the One who holds the reins of the Universe, history, time, space, nations and all life. It is God alone who judges; he decides who will rise and who will fall, gives life and takes it as he pleases (Psalm 75, 7). And he does it all with a meaning and a purpose that is obviously beyond us indefinitely. So, at God's will and call, one may be called to bear fruit in another generation (as grafters) or in another aeon/time. But, one like this will not be like an uprooted one, but like a plaster of one's own identity and fruition of the nation from which it comes to restore and put in order certain excesses of other nations/subjects. That is why nations and individuals will appear at the trial, or better said the individuals fulfilled as inheritance of the nation.

“Moving from the general to the particular, we understand how each nation has its own boundaries from God, given in its own specificity that constitutes the basis of any personal manifestation and whose tendency is to communicate with all other nations on the face of the earth¹⁶, in order to appear doxologically before the

¹⁶ Răzvan Codrescu reaffirms the position of thinkers from the beginning of the 20th century, emphasizing the idea that each nation is a natural reality ordained or permitted by God, having a purpose in the world, which can cultivate and clarify it, not against other nations, but together with them. Cf. *Spiritul Dreptei, între tradiție și actualitate*, Anastasia Publishing House, București, 1997, p. 177. This is what Simion Mehedinți thought in 1939, when, speaking to the students at the opening of the courses, he likened it to a natural product, a necessary and involuntary being, such as a forest, a steppe or another biogeographic formation which, “when it is well cared for, that is, cultivated with care, it represents a necessary source of energy and an endless possibility of more and more harmoniously combined social forms”. Simion Mehedinți (Soveja), *Poporul (Cuvinte către tineri)*, ed. a III-a, “Cugetarea” Publishing House, București, 1989, pp. 20-26, here p. 26. All this shows us that, ontologically speaking, there is no nation more valuable than another and that any ultra-nationalist claim is unjustified, but, at the same time, it is strongly affirmed against those who abstract from any national affiliation, that one cannot speak of the originality of a culture without indicating its specificity, which can only then become a universal good.

Lord together. Moreover, it is obvious that God Himself ordered life according to the Gentiles, not in a nameless Babylon. On the contrary, from the promiscuity of Babylon, God gave them salvation by reinvigorating them on the Gentiles, that is, on trunks of feelings, meanings and common actions that we call peoples”, as expressed by Mr. Ilie Bădescu¹⁷.

That is why we can say that the value of a nation, like that of a man, is given by the way in which it can embody and express the divine will or decision, as Simion Mehedinți prophetically expressed: “A man, like a people, values just as much as he understands from the Gospel and as he can follow the teaching of Jesus”¹⁸. It is the only viable criterion by which one can take the pulse of any person, any nation and any thing that is part of the created world¹⁹. Sparkling nationalism²⁰, ethnocentrism and

¹⁷ Cf. “Deșărarea” [<http://roncea.ro/2010/05/28/editorial-prof-dr-ilie-badescu-destararea/>] (30.06.2011, at 20:10)].

¹⁸ “Motto” to *Creștinismul Românesc*, Anastasia Publishing House, București, 1995.

¹⁹ Cf. Gheorghe BUTUC *Omul, Persoană devenindă*, Doxologia Publishing House, Iași, 2023, p. 341.

²⁰ “Any discussion of nationalism should refer to its ontological foundation: nation/kin/country. Etymologically, the word has its root in the Latin *natio* = birth. Therefore, all the definitions given to the nation refer to a natural community in which everyone joins by the act of his birth, to which is added the will of the members based on the same aspirations and goods (inherited), towards which there must be a responsibility. In other words, a special attention to the ontology of one’s own being to which must be added the desire to improve it through one’s own work and dialogue with others. In the modern history of Romania, several types of nationalism can be identified, of which, according to Răzvan Codrescu, three are more important: 1) Masonic (from Tudor Vladimirescu and Pashoptists to the founders of Junism); 2) Christian (with roots in Hasdeu and Eminescu, but consolidated by the great interwar generation); 3) communist (from the Ceausist protochronicism to the current discourse of the Greater Romania type). According to the same author, only the second is organic and legitimate, perhaps only, we believe, to the extent that this type of Christian nationalism is not anchored in the formula: The «Romanian people were born Christian», but makes a clear distinction between the natural truth – nationalism – and the supernatural truth – Christianity – as Nichifor Crainic defined the Christian nationalism of Nicolae Paulescu. Without recognizing this distinction, we can only have confused and exaggerated types of nationalism and ultranationalism, suffocating and harmful to any healthy nation.” For details see: Elisabeth CLÉMENT, Chantal DOMONQUE, Lavrena HANSEN-LOVE, Pierre KAHN, *Filosofia de la A-Z, Dicționar*

phyletism are precisely evidence of the failure and perversion of the person and the relationship: in that order, not the other way around. Those who do not fulfill themselves as a person/hypostasis move the emphasis from themselves, from pure self-care, to caring for others, other people, caring for history or the fate of the world, etc. However, those who structure themselves hypostatically/personally have the most balanced attitude towards God, towards themselves, towards others, towards the nation/country, towards the world.

Nationalism and phyletism can be viewed a kind of self-idolatry, an illusionism towards God (Whom it only uses in its own interest) and a kind of forced deification of the nation/country. That is why we say that we can speak of Orthodox Romania, but not of Romanian Orthodoxy or, in any case, if we speak of Romanian Orthodoxy, we must do so with great discernment and caution. Of course, there is an Orthodox specificity: Romanian, Greek, Russian, etc., as distinct ways of experiencing the same foundation of faith²¹, as a dowry for meeting God, but they are

enciclopedic de filosofie, transl., Magdalena and Aurelian Cojocca, All Publishing House, București, 2000 p. 354; Razvan CODRESCU, “Naționalismul – Călcâiul lui Ahile?”, “Introduction” to: *Fiecare în rândul cetei sale: Pentru o teologie a neamului*, Christiana Publishing House, București, 2003, p. 8; Nichifor CRAINIC, “Nicolae Paulescu – fondatorul naționalismului creștin”, in: *Fiecare în rândul cetei sale. Pentru o teologie a neamului*, p. 69; Nichifor CRAINIC., “Sensul tradiției”, in: *Fiecare în rândul cetei sale. Pentru o teologie a neamului*, pp. 31-39; Simion MEHEDINȚI (SOVEJA), *Poporul (Cuvinte către Tineri)*, pp. 216-220, all in: Gheorghe BUTUC, *note 1005*, in: *Omul, Persoană devenindă*, p. 379.

²¹ In the Romanian space, Father Ghelasie GHEORGHE (in tune with Father Stăniloae) suggestively highlights the distinction between the specific and the common in the Philocalic Tradition of Orthodoxy from time immemorial: “The background of Philocalia remains common, being that spirituality of the Holy Spirit transposed, but «clothed» in its own individual forms [...] But, also in the philocalic texts we see how some characters take shape: *the Sinaitic character* insists on restoring the dialogue between man and God through an asceticism, predominantly incorporeal [...]; *the athonite character* accentuates a kind of metaphysical, dialogue between the spirit and the flesh [...]; *the Slavic character* highlights that part of the underground that seeks to form a counterpart of negative life, to replace the true spiritual life; hence, Slavic spirituality is dominated by the struggle with the demonic [...]; *our Carpathian character* also comes with its specificity given by our very special environment, rich in vegetation. Hence an iconic specificity, without ruptures between soul and body, with the need for drastic asceticism [...]”. Cf. “Dialoguri diogenice cu părintele

not three different orthodoxies. Orthodoxy has shades, it has distinction, it has variety, just as the world, God's creation, is not barren monotony. However, orthodoxy cannot be hoarded, claimed, or encapsulated in just one part of it. Orthodoxy is the nature of man, Father Stăniloae said, and therefore anyone who recovers naturally becomes Orthodox, even without "legally" belonging to Orthodoxy. Otherwise, we would make exactly the Jewish mistake, we would shut ourselves in our own people and claim God only for ourselves. On the other hand:

“The outline of the specificity of a nation is given by the person. She is the one who highlights all the powers that dwell deeply embedded in the fiber of the nation. God addresses and enters into dialogue with the person, not with the race or the nation, because there is no independent hypostatic consciousness of the nation. At the same time, human beings are not abstract units, stripped of any determination and acting abusively and from the outside on the nature they value. Rather, there are certain characteristics that a person cannot be stripped of. Such a structural characteristic, it is the national quality of a person. This quality is not a feeling, a spiritual organ, an additional faculty of man, nor is it an accident added to the human, but it is the human itself in a specific form of his, which in no way means that he is less human or a different human. There is no antagonism between national and human. The more you delve deeper into human feelings, the more you penetrate into the core of your national qualities. In other words, the entire humanity is in the depth of your national nature, because it exists only in national form, nationally colored, nationally determined, as Father Stăniloae shows;

Ghelasie – interviuri realizate, comentate și diortosite de Gabriel Memelis”, second edition revised and supplemented, in: *Răspuns de Apărare*, Platytera Publishing House, București, 2016, pp. 138-139.

after which, there is no national man and no human without quality”²².

Therefore, every human birth has a very clearly outlined identity, always being a hypostatic birth of nature intended for all humanity, the whole universe, with undoubted echoes beyond time and space, forever and ever.

V. By way of conclusion: the balance of Romanianism in Orthodoxy

Orthodoxy means hypostatic living with universal openness. Otherwise, it is not orthodoxy, but orthodoxism. The nation/country is a particular endowment, an inheritance, like a barrage of specific characteristics and fruition, but with universal openness. Otherwise it is not homeland/nation, but nationalism. The most unfortunate juncture is the meeting between orthodoxy and nationalism, which turns into a kind of “Talibalism” disguised under the guise of love of God and country. At the bottom, however, in these unfortunate equations an identity trauma is hidden: you don’t know who you are or why you are, compensated with the so-called “dressing up Christianity”, a pejorative expression of visual identification of those who believe that by simply wearing a national costume they implicitly become assumed Christians and genuine patriots.

Consequently, we can be neither authentic patriots nor assumed orthodox until we make a clear distinction between nature and person, between unity and distinction, between identity and communion, definitively between who you are and what you are called to become. Any becoming is at once hypostatic and into being, key terms for anyone who wants to live balanced in his own life, in the time and race appointed by God to

²² Cf. Dumitru Stăniloae: “Ortodoxie și națiune”, in: *Fiecare în rândul cetei sale...*, pp. 95-119 and *Reflecții despre spiritualitatea poporului român*, Elixir Publishing House, București, 2001, pp. 10-15 paraphrased in: Gheorghe Butuc, *Omul, Persoană devenindă*, p. 407.

bear fruit and fulfill himself. Otherwise, theologically speaking, we have reiterated in other ways the old heresies of prosopism and monothelitism for the exaggerations of identity or those of the modalists and phyletists for the deviations related to substance. More concretely, the man who runs away from himself and does not live his own vocation will eternally hide, either under the masks of individualism or under those of nationalism, nurturing in vain a magical rescue from the abyss of self-neglect.