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Directions in Orthodox Anthropology during the Communist Period in Romania

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Abstract

During the of communist-atheist period, Orthodox theology in Romania was directed in three major areas, namely: a) the teaching activity and exclusively theological research; b) the major aspects of church life and its inner unity; c) ecumenism. Under the influence of the communist socio-political context in Romania, the problems of the contemporary world to which the Church was called to give an answer and a solution were associated mostly with an understanding of the Orthodoxy as a ministry to humanity and its progress. Thus, Romanian Orthodox theology has been driven to develop and deepen new aspects of the relationship between the Church and the world, the Church and the society. In the anthropological field, Father Dumitru Stăniloae offers a unified vision on man, society, and relationship between man and the world he lives in. Father Stăniloae developed and deepened the Orthodox anthropology from the perspective of Revelation and Patristic Tradition influencing the entire Romanian theology by his profound ideas.

Keywords

Romanian Orthodox Church, Romanian Orthodox theology, anthropology

I. General context of communism instauration in Romania and the Orthodox Church's attitude

In the second half of the 20th century Romania was in the process of social, cultural and religious transformation. The communist regime fully subservient to Moscow was gradually established after 23 August 1944, triggering a huge movement to adapt all social and cultural segments to new ideals imposed by the model of the *new man* and the *materialist - atheist doctrine*, preached in the name of peace, progress and brotherhood between peoples. The Orthodox Church could not evade these “great transformations” and the communist-atheist regime sought to engage even the Church as a whole in spreading its ideals and identifying them with those of the Romanian people. If we read the religious press of the time and the magazines of theology, we can see like in a mirror the transformations that took place in Romania from August 23, 1944 until the beginning of the second half of the 20th century¹.

The representatives of the new order - superior, in their view, to any orders history - wanted to transform the Orthodox Church and its theology in topics and tools of struggle and social aspiration in order to serve the party's ideology among the masses, among the faithful for creating *the new man*. But between the committed communist and the Christian life, of a practicing Christian, there was a conceptual disconnect of fundamental existence. The communists will declare themselves enemies of the Gospel and of the Christian moral and dogmatic fundamentals it was set on. Church's faith perspective was changed with regard to the communist creed: the God of the Church was replaced by the working class; Scripture was replaced by Communist Manifesto or other works of ideologues such as Marx and Engels. These and Lenin and Stalin will become “prophets” of the new social order aimed to overcome any faith and theology considered retrograde and thus provide a new anthropology outlook. The Church worship celebration is replaced by ideological manifestations called into the ceremony, the big Party Congresses and meetings where the superman was over-stated as a destination of all political and social efforts to change the world from the ground. Basically, communism borrows from other

¹ See especially the journal *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* between 1945-1950; Cristinel Ioja, *O istorie a Dogmaticii în Teologia Ortodoxă Română*, Editura Prouniversitaria, București, 2013, p. 530-555.

positions and perspectives from other external forms of religion, human religion seated in the place of God, man's self-proclaimed Superman.

II. Directions of development of Orthodox anthropology in communist Romania

In atheistic communist period, the Orthodox theology in Romania focused on three main areas namely: a) teaching interests and strictly theological research; b) concerns about major matters of life and the inner unity of the church; c) concerns regarding ecumenism. The world issues that Church had to give an answer and a solution were mostly identified with the understanding of Orthodoxy as service to humanity and its progress, given the political, social and communist context in Romania. Thus the Romanian Orthodox theology had to develop and deepen new aspects of the relation between Church and world, Church and society, with particularly concerned about human life.

In this regard besides *Apostolatul social (The Social Apostolate)*, the masterpiece of Patriarch Justinian, the Romanian theologians wrote numerous studies. They developed a real *theology of peace* understood as a "historical necessity" and a true *theology of service* understood as a diaconate of the Church to the world. This led to the concept of "*servant church*" as a unique orientation of the Church's pastoral dimension in the world. Also in this regard it was developed a real *theology of renewal or development* its core being the contribution of Church to the renewal of social structures. It aims the social justice and equality and the human renewal by delimiting it from the "darkness" of the bourgeois-landlord regimes. In this context, Romanian theologians developed *the theology of homeland service* understood as a Church mission among believers. "If Orthodox theology is right to say that the Church serves the world, then it is obliged to say that the Church serves primarily homeland".

Just like in a mirror we notice that the communist atheist and Orthodox Church mingled in the second half of the 20th century to the fall of communism, co-inhabitation that left a mark on a part of the Romanian Orthodox theology and on the thinking of some of its theologians. No theological evaluation of the early years of communism could escape the identification between the Church aspirations and aspirations of the

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people, ultimately identified with the aspirations of the communist state. In this context, even the aspirations of the Church were sometimes distorted, amputated and misunderstood although the church came to help members of a society imbued with atheism, who were actually members of the Church declared or not,. However we meet a strict and veiled separation of Church vision from the atheist state vision of time. Although we can easily identify clear elements of cohabitation between the Orthodox Church and the atheist state, so we can identify clear elements of distinction that the Church makes between its ideals and principles and those of the communist-atheist regime, regarding the role and dignity of human person. Thus we find a kind of paradoxical existence of the Orthodox Church regarding its relationship with atheist state in Romania in the second half of the 20th century. Although it made concessions for the atheist communist state, the Romanian Orthodox Church did not permanently lost its aims and ideals, but asserts them and pursues them in the context, remaining a spiritual milestone for the people. In 1971 a group of Romanian dogmatist theologians in a synthesis study on Orthodox dogmatic in Romania claimed:

“The concern of theology for the current problems does not mean that the Church supersedes state or secular institutions. On the one hand, the Church is a spiritual organism that relies on a revealed message and teaches a religious faith. She does not formulate social laws nor build economic ordinances etc. The Church has a sacramental structure, a dogmatic and moral teaching, a mission of her own, which give her real autonomy to structures and ideologies of secular society. On the basis of these structures and specific teachings, however, she must take a certain attitude towards events and situations that constantly change in the society and in specific cases. But in doing so, she does not close in certain forms and institutions and does not bound to a certain system of structures and social conceptions, because human society is in a process of continuous change and improvement. Therefore, due to this autonomy the Church avoids becoming dependent on a historical period. Instead she is always committed to human values, which has the duty to promote and serve in the society where she lives. On the other hand, being a community of Christian ministry the Church has a calling and a

specific mission to any society which humanity is organized in its historical evolution. In her pastoral activity, the Church must preach the Gospel in every context. Of course, given the social changing and the situations where it carries her pastoral mission, the Church will seek to serve the world in appropriate forms to each period of time”².

In another perspective, regarding the Romanian Orthodox theology renewal in the period under discussion and based on what we previously stated and classified, we must point: a) the awareness of overcoming dogmatism, i.e. to overcome the concept that dogma formulas represents rigid and impenetrable boundaries and not ontological springs and spiritual perfection which man is called to advance to; b) theology has to decipher the positive sense of the world, its movement and the faith in its progress on the basis of the divine Logos theology itself; c) opening the Romanian Orthodox theology to challenges of the faithful living in the world, connecting theology to their life and aspirations in a specific historical era by developing theological coordinates of peace, justice, brotherhood and equality; d) proving a positive understanding of the meaning of ecumenism and progress based on the concept of “open Catholicity” deepening the Synodal ecclesiology and the concept of “cosmic Christ”³.

² Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Prof. Nicolae Chițescu, Pr. Prof. Isidor Todoran, Lector Ioan Ică, Asist. Ion Bria, *Teologia Dogmatică în Biserica Ortodoxă Română în trecut și azi*, in “Ortodoxia”, year XXIII (1971), no. 3, p. 353

³ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Prof. Nicolae Chițescu, Pr. Prof. Isidor Todoran, Lector Ioan Ică, Asist. Ion Bria, *Teologia Dogmatică...*, pp. 362-365. Theologian Dan Ilie Ciobotea - now patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church - traces the essential aspects of Romanian theology since 1978, proving a unified and renewing vision to its condition, in a continuous process of renewal and rediscovery of sources and interrelation between spirituality, cult and dogma on the one hand and mission and ecumenical openness on the other hand: a) the effort to rethink - to the exigencies of our time - the great themes of the Orthodox faith; b) the social and pastoral aspect of Romanian theology; c) continuous interest towards the problems of ecumenism; d) the exploitation of the patristic and philokalic source mainly driven by Father Stăniloae’s theology, which “is built around the ineffable mystery and value of the human person in communion” (*Teologia română contemporană*, in vol. “Ortodoxia românească”, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1992, pp. 205-207; See: Cristinel Ioja, *Dogmatică și dogmatişti. Prolegomena privind aprofundarea Teologiei Dogmatice Ortodoxe în România în a doua jumătate a secolului al XX-lea și începutul secolului al XXI-lea*, Editura Marineasa, Timișoara, 2008, pp. 32-33).

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To these coordinates of the Romanian Orthodox theology renewal it is necessary to add the spiritual vision of the theology through the relationship between spirituality and dogma, dogma and cult. This was achieved especially and in a sublime way in Father Dumitru Stăniloae's thinking, by the translation of *Philokalia*, of important texts from the Fathers writings and theological syntheses made in a remarkable way that we shall return⁴. In terms of Romanian Orthodox theology opening towards the ecumenical dialogue we also add the particularly precious interventions, deepening and clarification of Father Ion Bria, fervent campaigner and initiator of a new vision regarding the ecumenical issues in Romanian theology. Also, regarding this Father Bria develops and deepens a true missionary vision of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the historical context after the fall of communism, by overtaking in most of the existing visions in Orthodox theology on its position to the concerns, aspirations and searches of its faithful, specific to the communist-atheist period⁵. Regarding the Church theology attitude towards the aspirations and interrogations of her faithful living in the world and society, a substantial contribution is that of father Dumitru Popescu, focused on the Church mission in the world. Especially after the fall of communism in Romania, his theology replaces the ministry theology, the peace theology, the homeland service theology and progress theology already developed and mentioned in the historical context, with the theology of openness to the world and its challenges. The latter has in the centre the dialogue that receives interdisciplinary connotations and employs primarily the present culture. In this context the Orthodox theology authentically affirms its ideals in a constructive and open dialogue with the

⁴ See Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. I-III, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1978 ; Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, Craiova, 1987 ; Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Studii de teologie dogmatică ortodoxă*, Craiova, 1990; Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Spiritualitate și comuniune în Liturghia Ortodoxă*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1986.

⁵ Ion Bria, *Autre Visage de l'Orthodoxie: L'Eglise de Roumanie*, Geneva: Conseil Oecumenique des Eglises, 1981; Ion Bria, *Curs de Teologie și practică misionară ortodoxă*, Geneva, 1982; *Go Forth in Peace. Orthodox Perspectives on Mission*, Geneva: WCC, Publications, 1986; *Credința pe care o mărturisim*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1987; *Destinul Ortodoxiei*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1989

human society and its culture in the centre being Jesus Christ Pantocrator, Logos the Creator and Saviour and the man in his dynamics to perfection⁶.

In general, the Orthodox anthropology of the Romanian theology is deepened in many directions, each with their focus, standing in unity with one another: a) Orthodox anthropology is presented in faithful continuity and unity to the biblical and patristic teaching, based on divine revelation; b) the Romanian theologians exploit the patristic theology referring to anthropology in a constructive, vivid, renewing and current way, linking it both to the Trinitarian dogma and to the Christological one. Efforts are notable for returning to Fathers, for understanding and deepening the theology in their spirit and for identifying and disposing of the Western Catholic and Protestant theology influences. These efforts were materialized to some extent in the theological thought of Professor Nicolae Chițescu and some of his disciples that maintain the traditional line in the Romanian theology, reaching its climax by the renewing theology of Father Dumitru Stăniloae and his disciples inspired by his thinking.

III. Highlights of the Orthodox anthropology in the Romanian theology from the communist era

One coordinate of the Orthodox theology orientation under communism was that of life, theology in the service of life. The theological education was oriented towards life and human. It was thus expressed a *religious humanist direction* in which prevailed humanity and social ethic, which reflected the humanism concerns of the time in a religious sense. The thinking was somewhat reversed namely: before being object of salvation, man was the object of preparing for salvation, for the social and moral perfection⁷. Likewise, theology had to be current, to draw inspiration from

⁶ Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *La communion du Saint-Esprit aujourd'hui, Trinité, Eglise, Création*, Genève, 1981; Idem, *Le soupir de la création*, Genève, 1982; Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *La puissance réconciliatrice de la Trinité dans la vie de l'Eglise et du monde*, Genève, 1983; Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *La dynamique de l'espérance*, Genève, 1984; Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Gloire à Dieu et paix sur la terre*, KEK, Genève, 1986; Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Mission et sécularisation*, KEK, Genève, 1987; Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Teologie și cultură*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1993.

⁷ See *În slujba culturii creștine ortodoxe – Omagiu Prea Fericitului Părinte Patriarh Justinian* in "Studii Teologice", year XIII (1961), no. 1-2, pp. 3-12, here pp. 6-7.

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contemporary life of the communist man, to help the faithful in carrying out their patriotic aspirations. If we analyze the clergy mentoring program courses during 1949-1960, we will discover the diversity of social and patriotic themes: peace, peaceful coexistence, patriotism, citizenship education, community life, property, and man's rights under various regimes⁸.

This social orientation towards desiderates of communism was maintained by special conferences, courses, seminars, meetings, so that future ministers of the Church to be trained in good civic education and to know the great achievements of the party and the people. The social orientation was maintained by *The Social Apostolate*, a work of social doctrine already mentioned, that articulated the principles, recommendations and theology prospects and its application in the socio-cultural context of the communist Romania. The starting point of this work was centered on the new context of Romanian society, and on the fact that - according to Patriarch Justinian - its doctrine is not new to the principles of the Gospel and Church tradition, but their contextualization for the new times of communist transformations. The ideas of this work force are centered on three aspects theologically argued: brotherhood between people, the service of the common good and peace⁹.

In 1989, Father Ion Bria shows that the Church is called to make a theological analysis of society and "to propose a new version of the *social apostolate* with a further theological understanding of people's lives"¹⁰. In other words, he recognized the present theological deficiency, because of the context for Communism and Sovietization of Romania in expressing social apostolate during Patriarch Justinian Marina. In this context, Father Bria advocates for a new understanding of the mission given the fact that "although she counts on important sociological grounds, the Church has to face unprecedented problems"¹¹.

There were theologians who managed to avoid the trap of theology ideologization by recourse to the Church Fathers. Among these is Father Dumitru Stăniloae who although approached theological and anthropological themes close to communist propaganda, he managed to

⁸ *În slujba culturii creștine ortodoxe...*, p. 7.

⁹ *În slujba culturii creștine ortodoxe...*, p. 9.

¹⁰ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria, *Destinul Ortodoxiei*, p. 95.

¹¹ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria, *Destinul Ortodoxiei*, p. 95.

overcome the communist ideological language and vision. For example in the study *Condițiile mântuirii (The Conditions of Salvation)*, Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae questions human salvation within the historical context and shows that salvation is not to leave this world and the debts towards it. He also kept away from theological arguments of the ideology that ruled Romania in time. At the same time, he shows good works of man are a condition of salvation, a favourite theme of collectivism in communist ideology. In this issue of good deeds, father Stăniloae sees the meeting between society, state and Orthodox doctrine, emphasizing from the outset *the quality* of good deeds in the Orthodox conception. Basically, as we shall see, while analyzing a recurring topic in communist ideology, he shows the superiority of Orthodox conception about good works and man's relation to the world he lives and to God. He explains the functionality of the three conditions of salvation: grace through synergy creates faith in man and they give birth to good works. Father Stăniloae does not avoid addressing interfaith theme. However, beyond the classical inter-confessional scheme we should note the developing of a rigorous conception about man's role in the world in any historical context. This conception is treated in an apologetic way and through the method of patristic synthesized by Saint Gregory Palamas. He substantiates the Orthodox understanding about good works not in any sociological or philosophical concept, but in the Orthodox understanding of grace seen as a "stream of divine power and love". After exposing the distinction between person, being and grace in Palamas' vision, emphasizing man's experience with the Trinity in the uncreated grace, the father expresses the human dynamic role through good deeds to the discovery of the world and its meaning, and to community cohesion and society.

"In any activity different individuals become a society, a symphony in continual progress. The activity creates community and it is required by community to harmony, it is supported by community. And since Christ opens and becomes transparent in every man to his fellow through deeds, and He expresses His Providence for them by their good deeds, people show Christ each other and those who look to Him honour in Him their Father from Heaven. But not only man and society sanctify themselves through morel activity, and Christ becomes transparent through them, but also through work man sanctifies nature and permits

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the rays of Christ light to reflect in its mirror as another Sun embellishing everything”¹².

We notice how he starts from principles stated in the communist ideology - work in the community, society - and goes on to show the functionality of people activity through the Christ presence in the community, society and the cosmos. The distinction between activity directed towards God and activity directed towards this world is followed by denunciation the consequences of separation between human life and activity in “two halves” foreign to the spirit of the Gospel. It is a subtle criticism against those who “resign themselves to a life of compromise” without fully engage neither in one nor the other¹³. In the process of Sovietization of Romania and atheist materialism father Stăniloae unequivocally states:

“Unfortunately, the universe lets to be organized in different crooked ways. For Christians, the healthy organization of the material universe and the coexistence between people that does not reach perfection in time equals to crossing of the universe and society by Christ’s presence. Incarnation of the Logos continues through our work on the cosmic scale, the divine penetrates our creature energies and the world energies and forms through them and is increasingly seen in a light that bathes them all (...) In the Orthodox understanding matter becomes environment for the radiating divine.”¹⁴

Father Stăniloae’s study reveals not only the confessional differences in terms of theme, but especially the mirror image of a Romanian society that became increasingly distant from the Orthodox view of the relationship man-society-cosmos. In order to surpass the separation between sacred and profane, affirming the necessity of Christ’s presence in the world and society is both an act of courage and a settlement of concepts sense that communist ideology operated with outside religious realities. In other words, the father shows the role of facts and of human activity in the world and society and the community sense, and that without Christ they remain in a functional and existential poverty. From this spiritual perspective he asserts Christianity dynamics contrasting the “conservative political spirit”, but also other foreign ideologies without Christ, like communism, which although he does not name them, he disavows in the following statement:

¹² Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria, *Destinul Ortodoxiei*, pp. 250-251

¹³ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria, *Destinul Ortodoxiei*, p. 251

¹⁴ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria, *Destinul Ortodoxiei*, p. 253

“Christianity cannot accept stopping the continuation of creation and man’s refusal to cooperate with God still further and God’s hindrance to make Himself transparent in the world and to unite as closely with the world”¹⁵.

IV. Theological and dogmatic issues of anthropology developed during the communist period

Anthropology in Orthodox Dogmatic in Romania in the second half of the 20th century still felt in some part, influences from the school theology, although in man’s understanding father Stăniloae delimited both from scholastic models and some slippage of the Russian Orthodox theologians from Diaspora giving them an answer even from the first half of the 20th century. The continuous and comprehensive deepening of dogma interpretation in the light of the Church’s Tradition, make Father Stăniloae an integral theologian in the sense of overcoming reductionism and unilateral historical context in which he lived and wrote. Father Stăniloae used creatively almost all the theological and philosophical currents of period in which he theologized, from the theological to the philosophical, from Schleiermacher’s psychologism to Harnack’s historicism, from Bultmann’s theology of un-mythologization to the theology of Karl Barth, Oscar Culmann and Jürgen Moltmann or Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar and from Lucian Blaga’s philosophy to that of Gabriel Marcel, Martin Buber and Heidegger. He goes beyond them whilst bringing a directly or indirectly correction from the orthodox teaching perspective¹⁶.

We give Father Stăniloae positions to the concept of Father Sergei Bulgakov about man. Influenced by Protestant theologian Thomasius, according to whom “the subject has its own reality, being different from nature other than the mere existence itself of nature”, Father Bulgakov states that “the subject is that mysterious spirit that cannot be in any way determined than the owner and manipulator of all characteristics and determinable components which constitute human nature”. Therefore

¹⁵ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria, *Destinul Ortodoxiei*, p. 254

¹⁶ Cristinel Ioja, *Dogmatică și dogmatişti. Prolegomena privind aprofundarea Teologiei Dogmatice Ortodoxe în România în a doua jumătate a secolului al XX-lea și începutul secolului al XXI-lea*, pp. 63-67.

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“He is uncreated, while nature is created. The Logos took his place in Jesus Christ, Who compared to divine nature has the same situation as ourselves against human nature; the human ego is different only gradually because the human ego is divine shred while the Logos is Divine hypostasis. Human nature does not endure any disaster by substituting its own ego with Logos, because both have divine essence. It is its destiny to be worn by the divine subject”¹⁷

Father Stăniloae combats this concept with patristic theology especially that of Leontius of Byzantium, St. Maximus the Confessor and St. John Damascene, stressing that by this theory, which holds that personal principle in man is divine, Bulgakov falls into direct pantheism¹⁸. Here is Father

¹⁷ Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, Editura Omniscop, Craiova, 1993² pp. 109-110. A study which has in the center asceticism and mysticism as inner issues of human deification process in Christ and the Church is more recently entitled *Ascetica și Mistica Bisericii Ortodoxe*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2002. This work written by Fr Stăniloae in the first years of the Communism in Romania, is based on St. Gregory Palama, St. Maximus the Confessor, Saint Symeon the New Theologian, Nicholas Cabasilas, Dionysius the Areopagite, Evagrius of Pontus, St. John Cassian, St. John Damascene, Nikodemos the Hagiorite, St. John of the Ladder and other spiritual authors of Philocalia. It also cites the theological and philosophical writings of his contemporaries: I. Hausherr, Jean Danielou, E Brunner, W Schmidt, Karl Heim, Max Scheler, M. Blondel, Louis Lavelle, Georg Koeppen, W Bousset, Joseph Lossen, Simon Frank, D Vișeslavțev, V. Lossky, M. Heidegger, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Olivier Clement, Ch Journet, Maurice de Gandillac, N Berdiaev, S. Bulgakov, J. Bois. M. Lot Borodine. He disagrees L. Binswanger who, by reversing Kierkegaard’s judgment argues that love precedes self-revelation, given the natural love, which does not require prayer or asceticism to be born in us as a gift of God. Binswanger believes that the infinite of love is an infinite of the universal nature and the way to meeting this absolute leads only through a concrete “you”. Therefore, for him, there is not a road leading to the Absolute as a person, because he does not think of an Absolute-Person. Father Stăniloae shows the Orthodox theology believes Christians meet first with the absolute “You” and this leads us to love our neighbors (pp. 371-372). For a historical, methodical and content analysis of this work see Jurgen Henkel, who in addition to the central theme of asceticism and mysticism with the deification as definition of humanity, emphasizes that this paper deals with the problems of epistemology, triadology, person philosophy, theology of love and communion (Jurgen Henkel, *Îndumnezeire și etică a iubirii în opera Părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae*, translated by Deacon. Ioan I. Ică jr., Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2003, p. 20).

¹⁸ Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, p. 110

Stăniloae's answer: "Hypostasis is that something the reality consists of rounded as a whole which has its support in itself. Hypostasis is only the way of being as an independent whole, rounded itself with the support of substance or nature. It is not addition of content or material, to what the nature or substance is. (...) The latter is not something extra nature, but nature itself in individual and independent form. Nature alone is not yet hypostasis, but although hypostasis is not identical with the nature or with a part of it, nor is an addition to the nature of the same kind with it, but a way of nature being".¹⁹ Thus "human nature cannot only be ever just as concrete nature, object or instrument, but it always exists as subject-object at the same time, as revealing agent and as a medium of revelation"²⁰

Although he cites positively though father Stăniloae criticizes Vladimir Lossky in *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă (Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)* (1978) for he gives the impression of a certain opposition between person and nature, attributing to the person opposing nature the Apophatic privacy of the "image"²¹. Father Stăniloae commenting on a text of Lossky continues:

"I totally agree the positive sense that Lossky provides in the second part of his presentation on human nature, and I think that the negative sense he assigns nature in the first part does not refer to human nature itself, but a disfigured state of nature"²²

Compared to Lossky's tendency to oppose *hypostasis* to *ousia*, acquired under the influence of Berdyayev's existentialism father Staniloae advocates for a balanced paradoxical anthropology where man is rationality and mystery.

He shows that human person is not only irreducible to nature as Lossky claimed, but also the realization of nature, this positive intuition of nature being a consequence of the balance between cataphatically and apophatically professed by Stăniloae. Genuine personalism does not discredit nature, but it assumes and perfects it²³. Father Stăniloae's anthropological vision has

¹⁹ Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, p. 111.

²⁰ Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, p. 114. Applying the theory of Bulgakov to Christology, puts Soteriology in difficulty in the sense that Jesus Christ did not take entirely the humanity. (p. 118).

²¹ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. I, p. 405.

²² Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. I, p. 406.

²³ Silviu Eugen Rogobete, *O ontologie a iubirii. Subiect și Realitate supremă în gândirea părintelui Dumitru Stăniloae*, translated by Anca Dumitrașcu, Adrian Guiu, Editura

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implications for all aspects of Orthodox Dogmatics. In building his vision he bases on the thinking of the Church Fathers - St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Maximus the Confessor, St. Athanasius, St. Basil the Great, Nikita Stethatos, St. Symeon the New Theologian, St. Gregory Palamas, St. Macarius of Egypt, St. Gregory of Nazianzus St. John Damascene, Nemes of Edessa - and some contemporary theologians. In the anthropological issue father Stăniloae offers a unified vision on man, but also on the complex relationships between people and between man and the world he lives, relationships seen through the relationship that man has with God in the Church and the world. Father Dumitru Stăniloae developed and deepened the Orthodox anthropology from the perspective of Revelation and Patristic Tradition influencing the entire Romanian theology and from abroad by his profound ideas correlated with the concrete life of man as permanent dweller in the world. Among these issues, which have become forceful lines of theological reflection on anthropology, we remember:

1. The theology of divine energies and the issue of grace experience and of full mystery of salvation through Christ in the Holy Spirit²⁴. The distinction between essence and energies is a central theme understood as the key to interpreting soteriological implications of anthropology, Christology, ecclesiology and pneumatology. It is highlighted by Father Stăniloae and generally by neo-patristic theologians against scholastic substantialism and against the concept that God is involved in a “becoming”. Father Stăniloae expresses a living, personal and loving God in a biblical, patristic, ecclesiastical and experimental vision.²⁵

2. The relationship between supernatural and natural, apophatic and cataphatic, with profound implications for all aspects of dogmatic theology.

Polirom, Iași, 2001., p. 111.

²⁴ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Criterile prezenței Sfântului Duh*, in “Studii Teologice” year XIX (1967), no. 3-4, pp. 103-127; Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Sfântul Duh și sobornicitatea Bisericii*, Ortodoxia, year XIX (1967), no. 1, pp. 32-48. In this study father Stăniloae puts the Holy Spirit activity in connection not only with personal piety, but also with communion and with progress in communion thus showing the catholic character of the Church. In this sense he approaches issues of communitarian spirituality: *Comunitate prin iubire*, in “Ortodoxia” year XIV (1963), no. 1, pp. 52-70; *Rugăciunile pentru alții și sobornicitatea Bisericii*, in “Studii Teologice”, year XXII (1970), no. 1-2, pp. 29-38. Some of these considerations are taken in good measure from the collective study, *Teologia Dogmatică în Biserica Ortodoxă Română în trecut și azi*, in “Ortodoxia” year XXIII (1971), no. 3, pp. 342-343.

²⁵ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. I, pp. 146-148.

Synthesis apophatic-cataphatic has existential relevance and presents a balance in the theological approach, being exploited on multiple levels: triadologic, Christologic, anthropologic and cosmologic. Theological epistemology needs affirmative theology terms; father Stăniloae gives also a manifestation to intelligence and reason to know God²⁶, the vocation of reason being to be spiritually advanced and open to the mystery of God through faith.

3. An Christological, complete, patristic and contemporary anthropology, overcoming dualism and existentialism of many contemporary theologians and philosophers. The theme of God's image in man has ontological, personalist, communitarian, dynamic and timeless implications favouring the understanding in genuine terms of the Eastern concept of *deification*. Here as in all the theology of Father Stăniloae the understanding of person in communion, modelled on Eastern triadology has a central place. Person and communion are seen as theological realities with ontological, ecclesial, sacramental, eschatological and soteriologic implications. Time and person, space and person, society and person, person and cosmos, person and deification are some substantial deepening of the Father Stăniloae regarding anthropology. Jesus Christ restores and deifies man and cosmos, and He is present through the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church, the world and man. Integral Anthropology surpasses reductionist anthropologies defining soteriologic meaning of man within history, Christ and the Church.²⁷ It offers a real perspective on man and his constitution that is put into a counterweight to anthropological reductionism of modernity and post modernity.

4. A true theology of creation that highlights the interrelationship without confusion between God-man-world, the cosmic dimension of salvation in Christ, the sacramentally-ecclesiologic dimension of cosmology, its eschatological and transfiguring destiny along with the holy man. He develops a true theology of the gift and dialogue, the cornerstone concept of the world as a "gift of God" and dialogue with God in and through the world with a Trinitarian foundation. According to Maciej Bielawski's phrase he develops *a philokalic vision of the world*²⁸. The world is a gift and a sacrament, and man is a microcosm and a mediator.

²⁶ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. I, p. 115.

²⁷ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. I, pp. 366-367.

²⁸ Maciej Bielawski, *Părintele Dumitru Stăniloae, o viziune filocalică despre lume*, translated by Deacon Ioan I Ică jr, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 1998.

Directions in Orthodox Anthropology during the Communist Period in Romania

The father underlines the soteriological finality of our gift made to our fellows: he speaks of a close relationship between divine reason, reasons of things and human reason²⁹, as well as about church - starting from Saint Maximus the Confessor - as Creation of cosmic and human form, about the meaning of cosmic creation as Church in building, about the human being as a church and the human person as priest of the church, about the bay itself, heaven on earth or liturgical centre of creation.³⁰ The world has a cataphatic-apophatic character, just as man has a cataphatic-apophatic nature. This apophatism of creation is a reflection of divine apophatism present in God's creation³¹. God-man-world interrelationship reveals a complete, paradoxical and theological anthropology and a theonome cosmology Christologically and ecclesially centred.

5. Christ's centrality in theology, creation, Church and human history. Ontological aspect of redemption, the foundation of human deification, is the centre of all Christian and ecumenical theology³². In the centre of his thinking is Christ, God and man in a Chalcedonic vision, Who is seen inseparable from the Holy Trinity, the structure of supreme love and in the theological concepts made by Saints Maximus the Confessor, Symeon the New Theologian and Gregory Palamas. Jesus Christ is the *mediator* between God and creation: in Christ we encounter mediation in a double sense from God to humanity and from humanity to God, Christ's redemptive work having ontological implications³³.

6. Catholic ecclesiology in the sense that the Church was also included in the organic mystery of salvation. The institutional aspect stays together with the eschatological and charismatic ones, the sacramental and the spiritual communion ones with in a Catholic ecclesiology³⁴. This catholic ecclesiology which is modelled on the Trinity has implications on the social level too, in terms of human relationships. Father Stăniloae's

²⁹ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. I, pp. 350-351.

³⁰ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Spiritualitate și comuniune în Liturghia Ortodoxă*, pp. 21-46.

³¹ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos lumina lumii și îndumnezeitorul omului*, Editura Anastasia, București, 1993, pp. 17-18.

³² Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Definiția dogmatică de la Calcedon*, in "Ortodoxia" year III (1951), no. 2, pp. 295-440.

³³ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, p. 197.

³⁴ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Din aspectul sacramental al Bisericii*, in "Studii Teologice", year XVIII, (1966), no. 9-10, pp. 531-562; *Biserica universală și sobornicească*, „Ortodoxia”, year XVIII, (1966), no. 2, pp. 167-198.

ecclesiology is an ecclesiology of communion³⁵ the supreme model being the Trinitarian perichoresis³⁶. At a time, in an ecumenical context he speaks of open catholicity³⁷.

7. Theology of Church opening to the world, specific to the divine-human dialogue and the human responsibility arising from here³⁸. Church opening to the world takes place not in the sense of her loss of identity through confusion with the world, but in the presence of the Church in the world to a progressive spiritualization and transfiguration of man and the world. The world is destined to become Church.

These aspects reveal Father Stăniloae's unitarian and interdependent vision on dogmas, vision that influenced the course of Romanian Orthodox theology regarding anthropology. Thus, beyond some conservative and scholastic nuances the Romanian theologians managed to take this view in subsequent anthropological approaches. During the communist period we can talk of an opening of Orthodox theology to the ideological challenges of communist context on one hand and, on the other hand of the healing and restoration of Orthodox anthropology in the spirit and methodology of the Church Fathers. Father Dumitru Stăniloae's work fertilized the thinking of other theologians such as Ion Bria, Dumitru Popescu and Daniel Ciobotea, the current patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

³⁵ Olivier Clement, *Orthodox ecclesiology as an Ecclesiology of Communion*, in "One in Christ" 6, (1970), pp. 114-115; Cristinel Ioja, *Părintele Dumitru Stăniloae și ecclesologia comuniunii*, in "Teologia", year VII, (2003), no. 3-4, pp. 126-148.

³⁶ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Sinteza ecclesologică*, in "Studii Teologice", year VII, (1955), no. 5-6, p. 270.

³⁷ See Nicolae Moșoiu, „*Sobornicitatea deschisă*” ca tipologie ecumenică, in "Taina prezenței lui Dumnezeu în viața umană. Viziunea creatoare a Părintelui Profesor Dumitru Stăniloae", second edition, Editura Paralela 45, 2002, pp. 246-283.

³⁸ Pr. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia deschiderii Bisericii față de lume*, in "Sobornost", 1969, pp. 662-672; *Responsabilitatea creștină*, in "Ortodoxia", year XXII (1970), no. 2, pp. 181-196. Regarding this issue he will develop and deepen the relationship I-you-us, probably under Martin Buber influence (Berlin, 1936). These relationships I-you, we-you will be detailed in an ecclesiological perspective. (see *Autoritatea Bisericii*, in "Studii Teologice", year XVI, (1964), no. 3-4, p. 187).