The Dialogue between Orthodox Theology and Science as Explication of the Human Condition

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The paper discusses the philosophical sense of the dialogue between science and theology. It starts with the recognition that the foundation of both science and theology originates in human beings, having an ambiguous position in the universe that cannot be explicated on metaphysical grounds but can be interpreted theologically. The dialogue between science and theology demonstrates that the difference in hermeneutics of representation of the world in the phenomenality of objects and the inaugural events of human life and religious experience pertains to the basic characteristic of the human condition and that the intended overcoming of this difference under the guise of the 'dialogue' represents, in fact, an existentially untenable enterprise. The paradoxical position of humanity in the world (being an object in the world and subject for the world) is treated as being the cause in the split between science and theology. Since, according to modern philosophy, no reconciliation between two opposites in the hermeneutics of the subject is possible, the whole issue of the facticity of human subjectivity as the sense-bestowing centre of being acquires theological dimensions, requiring new developments in both theology and philosophy. The intended overcoming of the unknowability of man by himself, tacitly attempted through the 'reconciliation' of science and theology (guided by a purpose to ground man in some metaphysical substance), is not ontologically achievable, but demonstrates the working of *formal* purposefulness (in the sense of Kant). Then the dialogue between theology and science can be considered a teleological activity representing an open-ended hermeneutics of the human condition.

Introduction

In any possible discussion of the relationship between theology and science (if theology is understood as experience of God through life and the physical sciences as explorations of the world within the already given life) there a question arises: What is the model that could best describe the relation between the experiential aspects of life and the knowledge of the world that positions humanity as one thing among others? In other words, if the Divine is perceived as the realm of the transcendent out of which life originates, whereas the operational realm of the physical sciences is related to the created world, the mediation between theology and science should *de facto* become an outward scientific explication of the meaning of the human condition in communion with the giver of life. This is a different perspective on the

dialogue in comparison with the one offered by traditional natural theology, which concentrates on making inferences from the world to God. A natural theology based on modern science does not represent a particular interest because it is clear in advance that the open-ended nature of the scientific enterprise will always contribute to the hermeneutic of the created world, thus indefinitely shaping the content of the natural theological conjectures with no hope of finding any certain evidence to the claim that it is God who created and sustains the universe. The infinite advance of science places modern natural theology in a condition of *uncertainty* about any claim of whether the world is created by God, or it is self-sufficient and requires no appeal to the transcendent in order to justify its existence.

The physical sciences treat the world as immanent, self-sufficient and explainable by means of the physical laws. It does not pose any question about the foundation of the contingent facticity of these laws (i.e., the question about their sufficient reason). In this sense, the question about the contingent facticity or concreteness of worldly reality (e.g., the concreteness of the global physical parameters of the universe such as its size and age) cannot be posed at all by the physical sciences. One can also add that the physical picture of the world is built and advanced by man in a condition of impossibility to understand why science (as a specific modus of human activity) is possible at all. Then, there is a question: what is the aim of the so-called dialogue between theology and science when neither theology nor science understand the foundations of their very possibility, and both function apophatically, knowing in advance that neither the meaning of communion with God nor the mystery of conscious embodiment in the universe will be disclosed? Theology refers to the contingent facticity of the world as being created out of the free love of God, whereas science explores this facticity as already given. If the sciences attempt to make inferences from the world to God by searching for the signs of his presence, these signs always remain *uncertain* for they relate to the unknowable God, whose ultimate sense cannot be exhausted through the signifiers borrowed from this world. If theology, by doing the opposite, places the content of its assertions in the physical context, it experiences another difficulty because it attempts to present *events* of communion with the infinite God in rubrics of space and time—that is, by using a philosophical language in order to enframe them in the phenomenality of finite objects. The fact that this does not make sense creates an opposite situation that points to a *certainty* of a negative kind.

Thus, the dialogue between theology and science always remains in the boundaries of the human incapacity to break through the oppositions between the *negative certainty* of philosophy (in relation to establishing whether the ultimate sense of the world is in God or not), and, alternatively, the ever *positive uncertainty* of science, which constantly advances its content and re-evaluates its own ontological claims with no hope for their convergence to some objective truth. Both the *negative certainty* of philosophy, with respect to ultimate questions, and the *positive uncer-*

tainty of science, with respect to knowledge of finite things, point towards a particular transcendental structure of human subjectivity that either struggles with the discursive justification of existential theological convictions or, alternatively, cannot existentially come to terms with the a priori limited capacity of discursive reason to produce *certain* statements about reality. In fact, the dialogue between theology and science, seen philosophically, represents an intellectual endeavour of balancing in one human subject the *negative certainty* about the impossibility of any response to the questions of existence of God, origin of the world and man, with the *positive uncertainty* in producing claims about the presence of God in the world, the origin of the world and man, from within the scientific enterprise. This balancing between two opposites in one and the same human subject (the inexplicable mystery of being the centre of disclosure and manifestation of the universe and, at the same time, being a thing among other things) represents a basic feature of the human condition in which the ultimate reconciliation of these attitudes seems to be impossible.

Indeed, a careful insight points to the fact that both theological convictions and scientific articulations originate in one and the same humanity, whose essence and sense of existence remain in both cases only *interpreted* but not fully understood. In other words, the link between the Divine and creation is detected by human beings who stand at the crossroads of the worldly and trans-worldly (being in an old-style parlance microcosm and mediator). The very possibility of formulating the task of mediation between theology and science belongs to humanity, so that inevitably the centre of this mediation and an enquiry is the human being itself. The view that humanity is the major theme of the dialogue between theology and science can be confirmed by making a parallel between the formal distinction and difference between two terms of the dialogue and the famous philosophical paradox of subjectivity, which dramatizes the ambivalent position of humanity in the universe as, on the one hand, being the centre of disclosure and manifestation of the universe, and, on the other hand, being one tiny physical part of this universe. The main argument of this text is that the dialogue between theology and science is exactly an attempt to elucidate and mediate between the terms of this paradox.

The central philosophical fact for any discussion of the relationship between theology and science remains that the world and humanity are disclosed from the already existent facticity of life within the rubrics of the specifically human consciousness. As an existential phenomenologist would say that the fact of life and disclosure of the world from within it is a basic fact and the beginning of any further articulations of the world. This observation leads to the following conclusion: in spite of the fact that the facticity of the human articulating consciousness cannot be explained metaphysically, being chained to the interiority of life, if this consciousness enquires into the sense of differentiation between the givens of theology and science, these givens must be existentially unified in order to articulate the sense of the Divine and the sense of the world in one single consciousness. The mediation

between theology and science must then go down the route where the predication of God and the world both contain a unifying human element that is constitutive for our sense of God as well as of the world. In a way, this type of mediation between the Divine and the worldly must itself have some traces of the initial creation of the world and humanity. In other words, the logic of mediation between God and the world through man must have been implanted in the initial intention of God while creating the world and man. Then the sense of the dialogue between theology and science can be seen as an attempt to disclose the motives of creation through which the apparent tension between theology and the sciences (manifested in the paradox of subjectivity) could be *morally* overcome.

In order to disclose these motives and bring them to articulation, we point to the problematicity of the very knowability of the universe as a whole. Human beings are bodily limited in space and their physical brain comprises, let us say, 20 cm on a liner scale. However, it is within this scale that human beings are capable of articulating the whole universe from its microscopic scales to the scales of clusters of galaxies and the entire universe. If this brain functioned only on the level of causal physical laws, it could not be able to transcend the immediately given physical region and produce an instantaneous synthesis of the universe, which is physically incommensurable with the human brain. Nevertheless, the capacity to do so points towards the fact that human consciousness is fundamentally non-local and has features enabling humans to view the universe from the God-given perspective. The question is: where does this capacity come from? Modern evolutionary epistemologists and adherents to the theories of emergent complexity would argue that all this is the result of the long adaptive evolution in which consciousness ultimately appears as an epiphenomenon of the physical. Their optimistic efforts to reconcile the *physically empirical* with the *philosophically intelligible* represent a contribution to a *hermeneutic* (not explanation) of the human condition with no hope of making this hermeneutic ontological. In view of this one could proceed through a different, Christian hermeneutic of the human phenomenon as made in the Divine image, more concretely in the archetype of Christ, who was the Word-Logos of God incarnate in flesh of Jesus of Nazareth. The event of the Incarnation was the only historical reference pointing to the unification of the Divine and the worldly in the Hypostasis of the Logos of God through whom and by whom all was made. And it is this unification that forms that *archetype* of searching for the reconciliation in the human articulation of experience of God (manifested in 'seeing' the universe as the unity of creation in a God-like fashion) and the world (explored scientifically), being *de facto* the task of the dialogue between theology and science. Regarding the archetype, we make a clear distinction and difference between Christ's hypostatic union of the Divine and human in the hypostasis of the Logos, where no tension between the worldly and its being created exists, and that communion between God and the world, which human beings have to effectuate in space and time, for example in their scientific ex-

plorations. Humanity is capable of attempting such a communion only in consciousness, whose created hypostasis *imitates* (that is, uses as an archetype) the Hypostasis of the Logos. In this sense, the goal and an 'infinite task' of the dialogue between theology and science can be seen as a conscious mediation between its terms with the purpose to effectuate communion of creation with God through man in the image of the Logos. In this case, the contingency of the created world as it is seen through the Divine image in man acquires some features of necessity related to the possibility of the Incarnation.

If the Incarnation is understood traditionally, as related to the embodiment of the Logos in the human flesh of Jesus of Nazareth, then its possibility is related to the existence of Jesus' body and the body of his Mother, the Virgin Mary. In this case, the logic of creation must have contained the possibility of such a development of the universe that Jesus' body, being consubstantial to bodies of all other humans, could emerge in the process of cosmological and biological evolution. Effectively, if the starting point of the dialogue between theology and science is man, so that the universe must contain the conditions for man's existence, then the role of science in the dialogue is to explicate the sense of physical reality in the context of this existence. One can definitely recall the cosmological Anthropic Principle (AP) attempting to create a causal link in the inference from humanity to the universe. However, in the context of the dialogue with theology, this AP acquires some new qualities, related not only to human biological bodies (and Jesus' flesh) but to the possibility of the Incarnation of God: the AP becomes a Theo-Anthropic Principle, implying that the universe must have had from the beginning the conditions for the Incarnation, assuming that the Incarnation, according to the Nicene Creed, was prepared by God before creating the universe.[1]

The link between the possibility of the Incarnation and the structure of the universe is assumed only on the level of the *necessary* conditions: indeed, the universe in its actual display is *necessary* for the Incarnation to take place, but not *sufficient*. If, by the virtue of a philosophical mistake, one would equate the *necessary* conditions with the *sufficient* ones, one runs the risk of ontologizing the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ and transferring the fleshly revelation of God in Christ to all structural levels of reality. A theological move in this direction happens in modern discussions of Christology called 'Deep Incarnation'.[2] Their essence can be expressed as follows: that 'the Incarnation of God in Christ can be understood as a radical or "deep" incarnation, that is, an incarnation into the very tissue of biological existence, and

[1] See, for example a classical book of T. Torrance, *Space Time and Incarnation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), as well as articles of G. L. Murphy, Cosmology and Christology, Science and Christian Belief 6 (1994), 101–111; 'The Incarnation as a Theanthropic Principle', *Word & World* 8.3 (1993): 256–62.

[2] For a general introduction, see for example a book of Denis Edwards, *Deep Incarnation. God's redemptive suffering with creatures* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2019), as well as the volume edited by Niels Gregersen, who coined the term 'deep incarnation', *Incarnation. On the Scope and Depth of Christology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 361–80.

system of nature'.[3] Formulated in such way, this idea would implicitly assert that that modern physics and biology contribute to the theories of the immanent presence of God in the world, risking to make the Incarnation a new type of metaphysical doctrine where the distinction between the necessary and sufficient conditions for the possibility of the historical Incarnation effectively disappears. A situation where a distinction between the *necessary* and *sufficient* conditions concerned with some extraordinary events (such as the Incarnation) can be found in the evolution of the universe, including, for example, that of the appearance of life in general and the life of Homo Sapiens. Indeed, the necessary physical conditions on this planet do not entail the appearance of life forms, a cell for example.

Biology at this stage of its development is not capable of producing a living cell from an inorganic matter. The very idea of evolution in all its complexity turns out to be so incredibly complex and improbable that scientists doubt that if nature on Earth had to start it again it could actually happen, and even if it happened, then its outcome would hardly be the same. The lack of understanding of the sufficient conditions for the evolution of life on this planet represents a serious problem for astrobiology, because the existence of exoplanets detected from Earth does no guarantee actual existence of life. Since the Incarnation is linked to the fact of existence of intelligent life on Earth, the sufficient conditions for the Incarnation are not understood—not only theologically, but first of all scientifically. Physics, through cosmology and astrobiology, just confirms this by showing that the more we understand the sense of biological life, the more we understand our incapacity of explaining its origin, in particular the origin of intelligence. All this points with a new force to the fundamental premise of any theologising and scientific knowledge, namely the unknowability of the sufficient conditions for existence of humanity and hence the unknowability of the possibility of knowledge as such. The sciences operate in the conditions of this unknowability and through its advance they explicate this unknowability even further. In this sense, one can guess that the dialogue between theology and science also explicates in a characteristic way the unknowability of man by himself reformulating the paradox of subjectivity, making the unknowability of man specifically palpable.

From what we have discussed so far, one could propose the following methodology of elucidating the sense of the dialogue between theology and science. First, the very facticity of the dialogue points to the fact that humanity exists in a paradoxical split of its intentionalities of consciousness with respect to its position in the world, reflected philosophically in the paradox of subjectivity. Correspondingly, any attempt of reconciliation of the terms of the dialogue is tantamount to an attempt to 'resolve' the paradox of subjectivity. Theology provides a reference to such a possible 'resolution' effected in the Incarnation of Christ. If the latter is taken as an archetype

[3] N. Gregersen, 'The Cross of Christ in and Evolutionary World', *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 40.3 (2001): 192–207 (205).

for the elucidation of the sense of the dialogue, this dialogue becomes intrinsically theological, contributing to an open-ended hermeneutics of the human condition in which humanity effectively copes with its own unknowability along the Christian path of life.

The Unknowability of Humanity at the Inception of the Dialogue

As we have pointed out elsewhere,[4] in spite of the explicitly ontic features of theological propositions (as distinct from the ontologically rooted natural sciences), the very ontic needs to have an ontological basis (as a corporeal basis of a subject), whereas the ontological condition must be elucidated ontically through the structural path of its constitution by the subject. Thus, the strict demarcation between theology and science on the basis of the opposition between ontic and ontological can hardy be achieved, contributing to the two-fold argument that a naïve positing of experience of the Divine outside the material conditions of the possibility of its expression, represents *de facto* faith without reason (whose existential and soteriological meaning remains obscure), whereas, at the same time, any physical reductionism in the constitution of humanity also fails without an appeal to theology of humanity's creation. The mediation between theology and science does not represent any metaphysical necessity but represents events of life—that is those dimensions of the human will and reason that cannot be deduced on the grounds of causality pertaining to the world.

The facticity of the dialogue points to the fact that it represents the event-like phenomenon related to life's self-affectivity, so that its interpretation demands a philosophy that deals with the phenomenon of man as 'event' of Life, the phenomenon that has a 'meta-ontological' status, ordaining and justifying the very possibility of the philosophical as well as scientific knowledge of the world.[5] However this 'event of life', or, simply put, the human phenomenon, being given to humanity, does not receive any further elucidation by man himself. The self-imposed question, 'What is man?', remains unanswered. Seen from this standpoint, all human activities, including those of science as well as religious experience, originate in one and the same man in the conditions that this very man does not understand his own essence. Then both theology and science, as well as the dialogue between them, are functioning in the conditions of man's self-incomprehensibility. The sciences and religions are efficacious on the level of phenomena since they describe the facticity of life and explicate the sense of humanity through a never-ending hermeneutics of the world. In a way, human activities give witness to that which is unknowable in

[4] A. Nesteruk, 'Philosophical Foundations of Mediation/Dialogue between (Orthodox) Theology and Science'. In *Orthodox theology and Modern Science: Tensions, Ambiguities, Potential*. Eds V. Makrides and G. Woloschak (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2019), 97–121.

[5] Ibid.

man, contributing to a view of humanity as an 'infinite task' for itself. According to K. Jaspers, 'We cannot exhaust man's being in knowledge of him, we can experience it only in the primal source of our thought and action. Man is fundamentally more than he can know about himself'.[6] The sciences, philosophy, and theology all pose questions to man about man himself that cannot lead to any definitive answer, thus provoking further questions.[7] Correspondingly, the dialogue between theology and science, as a particular modus of the human enquiry in the nature of things, contributes to further explication of the riddle of man with no aim of creating any metaphysical concept of man. The seeming dualism in comprehension of reality, either on the grounds of the sciences or through theological insights, explicates the dualism in the human condition between *being* and *having*: 'We are, but we do not possess ourselves',[8] that is we are, but it is not us who created us. One can say that man has his own 'I' as a co-participant of the infinite all-embracing being; however, it is because of the infinite character of such a communion with being that man cannot comprehend the sense of this communion's contingent givenness. As the sciences explicate the modus of 'we are', that is the outward way of our existence as things (objects), they do not explain as to 'why we are', that is, why humanity is given to itself in such a way that the detection of the 'we are' is possible at all. The drama of not being able to create himself is transferred by man to the cosmological scale when man is not able to understand his place in the universe. Being groundless in the universe, humanity does not *have* its own home—not only in the sense of space, but also in the sense of the laws that it cannot control. Theology clarifies this issue of man not being able to possess himself by transforming it to the issue of participation *in* and communion *with* that which escapes the limits of metaphysical definitions.

The sciences play a twofold role in comprehending and formulating the sense of man's unknowability and groundlessness in the universe. It is science that makes it possible to bring on board outward aspects of man's unknowability through its insignificance in the physical universe. Without a scientific refinement of the predicaments of the human condition, man would not be able to understand the scale of his *epistemological significance* for comprehending the universe and developing an articulated capacity of longing for the ultimate ground of its existence, either in the world or beyond it. The ontological groundlessness of humanity is exactly that intrinsic part of the human condition that provokes humanity to search for grace or 'blessing' for its existence from that which is beyond the world and man himself.

The predisposition of transcending the sphere of the unconcealed relies on participation and communion with that which is beyond the visible and sensible. This transcending, even if it is not initiated by the sciences, is reactivated in man and

[6] K. Jaspers, *Ways to Wisdom* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 63. See also p. 66.

[7] C.f. J. Moltmann, *Man. Christian Anthropology in the Conflicts of the Present* (London: SPCK, 1974), 2.

[8] H. Plessner, *Conditio humana* (Berlin, 1961), 7.

made existentially dramatic through cooperation with the sciences. One cannot assert that the sciences are paving the way to a theological apprehension of the world, but at least one finds them refining the delimiters of the human condition, turning to a theological search for the sense of existence. It is in this sense that the unknowability of man by himself, endorsed by scientific knowledge, becomes a factor for engaging with theology through abandoning any straightforward attempts to overcome this unknowability on the grounds of metaphysical concepts. The implicit hope and longing for overcoming the man's incapacity to know himself , present in the modern sciences and some branches of philosophy, forms a hidden *purpose* implanted in the core of the human condition. This *purpose* is to acquire a 'home' in being, to ground man in that which he always transcends. This *purpose* is not ontologically achievable,[9] so the whole process of knowledge is driven by this *purpose* only *formally*, that is as a *teleological activity without a material purpose*. The latter implies that the 'reconciliation' between science and theology could not be achieved so that the dialogue between them can be considered a teleological activity without a *material purpose*. Theologically, this activity could be understood as a *mediation* between moral divisions between his sense of creaturehood in the midst of the physical world and, at the same time, his being in communion with that which is beyond this world.

The Paradox of Subjectivity and the Dialogue between Theology and Science

The condition of man's unknowability by himself can easily be explicated through the so-called paradox of subjectivity[10] whose concise formulation is: 'We can describe the relations between subject and world as purely intentional relations as opposed to (objective) spatial, temporal, and causal relations. We can appeal to the distinction between belonging to the world of objects and being a condition of the possibility of the world of objects (as meaning). Perhaps the broadest terms for these relations would be the *transcendental* relations and the *part-whole* relation',[11] or 'It is necessary to combine the recognition of our contingency, our finitude, and our

[9] 'If he [man] ever finally got "behind himself", and could establish what was the matter with him, nothing would any longer be the matter with him, but everything would be fixed and tied down, and he would be finished. The solution of the puzzle what man is would then be at the same time the final release from being human' (Moltmann, *Man*, 2).

[10] The formulations of the paradox are abundant. See e.g., I. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, Conclusion, in *Kant's Critique of Practical reason and Other Works on The Theory of Ethics*, Trans. T. K. Abbot (London: Longmans, 1959), 260; E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 179. The review of different formulations of the paradox can be found in A. Nesteruk, *The Sense of the Universe* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 136–61. See also D. Carr, *The Paradox of Subjectivity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[11] Carr, *The Paradox of Subjectivity*, 116.

containment in the world with an ambition of transcendence, however limited may be our success in achieving it'.[12]

The paradox, as the co-existence of two attitudes to the hermeneutics of the subject, appears to be a structural element of human subjectivity in general. The self-givenness and self-affectivity of 'the subject' implies the question of the facticity of consciousness, which is missing from any articulations of the world. As was expressed by M. Merleau-Ponty,

> …consciousness attributes this power of universal constitution to itself only if it *ignores the event which provides its infrastructure and which is its birth*. A consciousness for which the world 'can be taken for granted', which finds it 'already constituted' and present even in consciousness itself, does not absolutely choose either its being or its manner of being.[13]

It is because of the inexplicability of the facticity of consciousness in metaphysical terms that it can be considered an 'event',[14] an event of the existence of man. The temptation to find that missing foundation of its own realization in existence leads consciousness to transcendence in a theological direction, which exceeds the scope of philosophy but, at the same time, extends philosophy towards the appropriation of those realities that escape the phenomenality of objects.[15] Then the paradox of subjectivity cannot have a metaphysical explanation and falls under the rubrics of *event*, that is something as given with no recourse to its possible metaphysical justification. In this case, the reconciliation of the terms in the paradox is equivalent to the elucidation of its very appearance in the subject—that is appearance of a personal subject, which is treated as *event* in the sense that no metaphysical explanation for existence of this subject is possible. Theology inevitably enters the discourse for, as we argued before, events are a 'natural' domain of theology.[16] The problem of origin of the paradox is reduced to the existence of the pre-predicative world, the life world, which in its sheer givenness is not reducible to anything in the natural world.

[12] T. Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 9.

[13] M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1962), 453 (emphasis added).

[14] *Event* can be described as the consummation of that whose essence did not give the possibility of its foreseeing, as if one could foresee the inconceivable impossible from the perspective of the conceivable possible (that is from within metaphysics with its principle of causality). See details on phenomenology of events in C. Romano, *L'événement et le monde* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998).

[15] In general, the term 'phenomenality' describes the quality or state of a *phenomenon*. For example, phenomenality of mundane things corresponds to their being perceptible by the senses or through immediate experience. This constitutes the notion of the phenomenal world as the world of visible, empirical phenomena. One can talk about phenomenality of objects as entities being constituted according to the rubrics of 'I think', so that such a phenomenality can be described in four rubrics: quantity, quality, relation, and modality. The phenomenality of objects is different from the event-like manifestations, whose phenomenality cannot be reduced to the stated four rubrics and where there is the excess of intuition over the discursive faculty.

[16] Nesteruk, *Philosophical Foundations,* Op. cit.

Its interpretation proceeds from the theology of creation of life connoting with the Life understood as Divine Being. In words of M. Henry:

> I am not only for myself, i.e. this individual appearing in the world, a thing among things, a man among men…. In order to relate everything to oneself, one must first of all be this Self to whom everything is related, one must be able to say *I am me*. But the point is that this *I am me* is not at all originary... A Self such as that of man, a living transcendental Self – such a Self is only ever to be found in the 'Word of life' of the first letter of John, whom Paul describes as a 'First Born among many Brothers' (Romans 8: 28-30).[17]

In other words, the transition from the philosophical paradox to its theological sense can only be made by reducing the facticity of the paradox to the impossibility of its metaphysical description, that is to 'event', manifesting God's creation of that which is metaphysically impossible (and hence unexplainable).

Theologians of the past expressed the paradox in terms explicitly containing a reference to that which is beyond the world, that is to the fact that the paradox explicates the condition of creaturehood. In his Epistles to Romans, Apostle Paul recapitulates man's paradoxical created condition by contrasting his serving God's Law with his mind, and serving the law of sin with his unspiritual nature (Rom 7:25). Maximus the Confessor advocated that God's image in man made him capable of mediating between moral divisions in himself and in creation in general, for example between the sensible (visible universe) and intelligible (invisible, for example an image of the world's wholeness in consciousness): 'As a compound of soul and body he [man] is limited essentially by intelligible and sensible realities, while at the same time he himself defines [articulates] these realities through his capacity to apprehend intellectually and perceive with his senses'.[18] The Russian philosopher V. Soloviev explicitly referred to God in his description of the human ambivalent condition: 'Man comprises in himself all possible oppositions, all of which are reduced to one great opposition between the unconditional and conditional, or between the absolute and eternal being, and a transient phenomenon, an illusion. Man is *deity* and *nothing* at the same time'.[19]

Now it is reasonable to pose a question on whether the impossibility of metaphysical explication of the paradox of subjectivity (that is unknowability of man) characterises something fundamental in the human condition that as such represents an element of its constitution in reflection. The philosophical impasse here

[17] M. Henry, 'Phenomenology of Life', *Angelaki* 8.2 (2003): 100–110 (104).

[18] Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua* 10:26 (PG 91:1153B) [ET: 'Various Texts on Theology, the Divine Economy, and Virtue and Vice', 5:71, in *The Philokalia: St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth. The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, 4 vols., eds G. E. H. Palmer, P. Sherrard, and K. Ware (London: Faber, 1979–95). v. 2, 277].

[19] V. Soloviev, *Readings on Godmanhood* (Moscow: Pravda, 1989) (in Russian).

may be elucidated through an appeal to theological anthropology relating the present human condition to the event of the Fall. In other words, the question can be posed like this: does the paradox of subjectivity in its outward formulation manifest the essence of that which represents a consequence of the event of transgression from union with God granted to the first man at the moment of his creation (implying that the first man was knowable to himself)? If this is true indeed, the consequence for our topic would be also manifesting and conclusive: the dichotomy between a scientific and theological vision of the world would originate in the Fall and the very *telos* of reconciliation between them can be treated as the healing and redemption of sin, which ultimately would resolve the paradox and thus unify theology and science. In addition to such a conclusion, one could argue that the split between science and theology encapsulates that characteristic feature of the post-lapsarian condition of man and the world, which Yannaras emphatically described in terms of 'evil'. According to Yannaras, the paradox of subjectivity is a particular form of explication of 'evil'.[20]

Yannaras's reading of the paradox through his understanding of man (as a creature longing for immortality but facing a defeat by the laws of nature)[21] contributes to the longstanding discussion of the paradox by philosophers, qualifying it as an expression of the basic *anxiety* of humanity in the world, its despair and non-attunement to the world, depriving man of understanding of the sense of existence. Can the paradox of subjectivity (implied in Yannaras's quote) thus be treated as a definition of 'evil', related to the human incomprehension of his own condition, that is to the condition after the Fall? Or does the notion of 'evil', invoked by Yannaras, have a sense independent from the Fall and inherent in the condition of creaturehood as such? I would incline to defend the second option because of one striking theological observation, namely *that the unknowability of man by himself (entailing the paradox and the sense of the autonomy of nature in him) is part of his Divine image*. The fact that human nature is unknowable follows from its being an image and likeness of God, that is of that One Who is unknowable. In a classical excerpt from patristic texts, Gregory of Nyssa states: 'Since the nature of our mind, which is the likeness of the Creator, evades our knowledge, it has an accurate resemblance to the superior nature, figuring by its own unknowability the incomprehensible Nature'.[22] This entails that any attempted resolution of the paradox of subjectivity, as a search for the answer to the question 'What is man?', qualifies such an attempt (in which man defines himself in terms of something that is less than God) as a distortion of the

[20] C. Yannaras, *The Enigma of Evil* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2012), 16.

[21] C. Yannaras, *The Meaning of Reality* (Los Angeles: Sebastian Press & Indiktos, 2011), 123–43.

[22] Gregory of Nyssa, *De hominis opificio* [ET: *On the Making of Man,* NPNF 5, 387–427 (397)]. See on the unknowability of man an article J.-L. Marion, 'Mihi magna quaestio factus sum: The Priviledge of Unknowing', *The Journal of Religion* 85.1 (2005): 1–24, as well as a chapter from J.-L. Marion, *Certitudes négatives* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2010), 21–86.

Divine image.[23] One can suggest that for the first man the question of 'What is man?' did not exist in the same form as it is posed by us because of his union with God, as following God, keeping him free from the anxiety of existence as creaturehood. In this case, the event of the Fall can be characterised as the loss of the primordial 'privilege of unknowing' and the lapse in the state of anxiety and homelessness in the world. Then the paradox (as an encapsulated 'response' to the question 'What is man?') explicates in a positive fashion the essence of the ambivalence of the human condition: it exists subject to the physical conditions of the world, but in the Divine image that is in communion (not union!) with God.

Then the question is: what is meant by evil in Yanaras's reformulation of the paradox? Since the assertion of unknowability of man is based, *de facto*, on a premise that he cannot create himself whilst, as a creature, holding the Divine image, the Fall can mean only a change of attitude to this inherent creaturely condition. In this case, that evil to which Yannaras refers is related not to the ontology of the created world but to evil in man as the loss of the privilege of being in *union* with all creation and God, resulting in his separation from the world and seeing it just as a medium of necessity and slavery, an obstacle in man's ambition for transcendence. In this sense, the drama of the paradox as well as the tension between science and theology represent such an attitude to the sense of existence in which the basic condition of creaturehood (as a premise for being in communion with God-Creator) is forgotten. This makes it possible to treat Yannaras's interpretation of the paradox in terms of evil in a *moral*, but not ontological sense, explicated in similarity with those moral divisions in creation that were at the center of Maximus the Confessor's theology of deification as mediation between these divisions and, ultimately, mediation between the created and uncreated, between the world and God. Seen in this perspective, we argue that the paradox explicates the basic predicament of the human condition as being *a creature in communion with God*. However, as we will discuss below, it is this predicament that paves the way for man's deification: to be deified, one must be created.

If the conditions of 'evil' in Yannaras's sense correspond to the moral tensions related to the apprehension of the world and man's inability to comprehend its facticity through the corporeal cognitive faculties, one can argue that the sciences help humanity to adapt to the conditions of 'evil' in man himself, that their primary task is to articulate, although indirectly, particular aspects of this 'evil'. One needs to see 'evil' in order to develop an impetus for transcending its conditions. In fact, even to articulate the ambivalence in the human condition as 'evil', one needs *grace*,

[23] J.-L. Marion in his *Certitudes negatives*, p. 41, quotes a passage from St Augustine's *De Trinitate* 10.5.7, in which, as Marion claims, a phenomenology of sin is represented through describing the human soul as turning away form God, 'slithering and sliding down into less and less, which is imagined to be more and more'. What is implied by this is that any attempt of man to define himself on the basis of the human only is tantamount to denying life as the gift of that other than man—that is, God—through resemblance with whom man resembles himself, and thus is only capable of defining himself.

as that move which positions 'evil' in man beyond his natural condition. In view of this, one reasonably comes back to the question of the sense of the dialogue between theology and science. Science dispassionately articulates the conditions of 'evil' (that is natural conditions), without giving any moral judgment on whether nature (as being recapitulated in man) is good or bad for humanity. The moral judgment comes from theology, which contrasts the ends of nature with the ends of humanity, and which Yanaras described as the 'autonomy of nature [that] we human beings see a challenging "absurdity" (a violation of our own rational conception of *meaning* in the world)'.[24] In his desire to subordinate the ends of nature to the ends of himself, man exercises his archetypical 'likeness' to God by knowing and judging things according to his free will.[25] However, man's actual incapacity to transform nature—and first of all his own nature—in the manner of its creator, is determined by the fact of creaturehood. Correspondingly, the notion of 'evil' that is invoked in Yanaras's quote can be treated as a certain misuse of the Divine image in man, who attempts to tame the ends of nature (in order to define himself) not through his privilege of creaturely communion with God, but through his illusion of the unlimited power of controlling the material world through reason. This ambition of man is his moral problem related to the ignorance of the fact that his privilege of the Divine image is the result of otherness with respect to God—that is, creaturehood in communion.

The overcoming of this 'evil' in man, that is, mediation of moral tensions between parts and aspects of creation in man himself, cannot be done metaphysically; that is, no philosophical concept is possible that would resolve the riddle of man without referring it to the theology of creation. The sense of creaturehood arrives only through grace in communion, which *de facto* means existential transcendence. The possible overcoming of the difference between human ends and the ends of nature can only be seen in terms of soteriological purposiveness, avoiding any ontological reference either to the natural state of man or to any particular modus of the natural in the world, which would allegedly manifest the achievement of such a purpose. The theology of Maximus the Confessor on man's mediation between moral tensions (divisions) in creation always warned its readers that no ontological bridge between creation and its creator will be possible through mediation and deification. In other words, the ends of nature will never be subordinated to the ends of humanity on the ontological level. On the moral level, the ends of man and the ends of nature can be reconciled through such a transfiguration of the spiritual insight in man that will ease the drama of nature's autonomy and make humanity free not from the conditions of nature, but from the anxiety of creaturehood.

One can summarise that the unknowabililty of man by himself, expressed through the paradox of subjectivity, encapsulates the essence of the moral division

[24] Yannaras, *The Enigma of Evil*, 16.

[25] The analogy comes from St Maximus the Confessor's discussion that God knows created things according to his will (*Ambigua*, 7, PG 91:1085B).

in man between his limited created position in the physical world and his intellectual and spiritual capacity to transcend the world and to long for the unconditional and eternal. The dialogue between theology and science then represents a future explication of man's drama of creaturehood, providing us with the open-ended hermeneutics of man's created existence in communion with God.

The Incarnational Archetype in Humanity as the Approach to the Dialogue

The approach to the question 'What is man?' through the notion of communion receives its biblical justification through the answer that God gives to Moses: 'I will be with you' (Exodus 3:12). It is the way how that God who can say 'I am who I am' (Exodus, 3.14) that tells Moses that he will be with him. The whole essence of the question 'Who am I?' as a concrete incarnation of the question 'What is man?' entails, through the encounter with God, the answer that is not a direct response to that which is asked. Rather this is an indication that the implied sense of the response can only be given in the form of an invitation of man into God's midst through the way of life. Communion is thus following the same imperative of God 'I will be with you' on the side of man: 'I will be with You by following You'. By accepting God's communion, man does not receive any answer on what he can or cannot know, what he ought or ought not do, what he may or may not hope for: thus he does not receive an answer to the question of 'What is man?' as it was formulated by Kant. For God indicates to man that this question cannot be addressed and responded in abstraction simply because without communion with God it does not have sense and cannot be clarified. 'Man is man only in communion with God' means that God offers man the way, which constitutes his history and endows him with the future. There is no being of man as such, devoid of the inaugural event of communion with God enabling man to have future, that is life. In other words, the 'knowledge' of man by himself as such turns out to be the unfolding of his history towards that for which this history was created: man receives the sense of his *telos* formulated not in terms of those potentialities that are implied in the three Kant's questions, but through the definition of communion. It is only by following this God-given (through communion) purpose that man can indefinitely unfold and constitute the sense of its own existence knowing in advance that the ultimate union with God, phrased theologically as deification, will yet leave untouched an inerasable difference (*diaphora*) between a creature and the Creator. It is a dedication to this *telos* that releases man from the incessant idolatry of his images of himself, thus effectively removing all dramatism of the unanswerable nature of the question 'What is man?', through which God releases man from any search for rootedness in the rubrics of the world by constantly reminding to him that while being in the world, man is not *of* the world. Man's anxiety of his contingence and homelessness in being, entailing the question of 'What is man?', is intended to be replaced by offering home

in God's midst, that is through being introduced to communion with God, who will be with him on all his ways.

Then the refusal to follow God, meta-historically associated with the Fall, meant that man imagined that he could attain to himself by choosing to resemble something less than God. This is rather a paradoxical situation: to be man in communion with God is to remain in the conditions when man's Divine Image is detected, but not defined. If man attempts to define himself in some metaphysical terms pertaining to the world, that is if he denigrates his existence from transcendent communion to some immanent attribution, he effectively commits *sin* because he co-relates his humanity to something that is less than God. By not following God and introducing into his own definition something less than God, man predisposes himself to despair and homelessness in being because there is nothing in being that gives man a dwelling place and the comfort of reciprocity.

However, as the Bible teaches us, the invitation to communion with God, in order to ease the feeling of despair and anxiety, does not find a straightforward response in man: it represents an existential difficulty, because communion transcends the limits of the empirical, which is accessible to the senses and logical thinking. Certainly, there always was a temptation to treat the idea of communion as an abstract ethical ideal leading to a sort of religious humanism. In reality, this invitation to communion never implied any abstract teaching on how to answer basic questions, previously quoted from Kant. It implied to see God in creation and hence to be in communion with him. This 'did not prevent men from wallowing in error',[26] so that the invitation to communion, not recognised by men, was reactivated through the descent of God towards man when God assumed reality of the human flesh. This became God's self-response to his longstanding invitation to men to be in communion.

On the one hand, God's descent to the poverty and miserableness of the human condition, entering into friendship with the wicked and sinful, brought nothing new to man in terms of his own explanation. The vulnerable condition of the human affairs in the world with all horror and atrocities of humans with respect to themselves was not explained away and healed away. Christ himself, by being crucified and passing through the brutal attitude of humans to humans, did not imply that he was teaching them from the Cross 'what *is man*'. He did not attempt to teach of man along the lines of the Greek ideal of beauty and kindness. He rather confirmed to them through his witness to the Father that they 'do not know what they do' (Lk 23:34). By rephrasing a response to the Kantian question, Christ demonstrated to man that without receiving Christ as the Son God, and as the Son of Man, 'man does not know what to do, and what to hope for, he cannot avoid despair and uncertainty of not being able to approach the mystery of the his existence'. Through his parables,

[26] Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* 14 [ET: (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 42].

Christ inaugurated the Kingdom of God, which was available to all, not only to those ideal men of the Greek philosophy. For anxiety and despair, groundlessness and non-attunement to the world, expressed through the paradox (as an implicit longing for immortality), can be healed in man himself only through abandoning the idea of finding his own foundation in that 'substance' of the world, which, in spite of being created by God, is yet in a state of indifference to man and his affairs, a state described above as a primary 'evil'.[27] Being a creature, man cannot receive any hope of elucidating his condition from a creature that is not hypostatic. However, man can confess unconditional love by imitating God, who created the world with no hope of reciprocal love from the world. But to exercise such a love, man ought to follow his archetype through God's promise of being in communion with man. In this sense, the Kantian questions received practical (not abstract philosophical) answers explicating the sense of the offered communion: As an image of God, man cannot *know* himself. He can know things of the world only in the delimiters of his own unknowability. Correspondingly, to avoid the anxiety of this unknowability, man *ought* to follow Christ (= to be in history) in order to see the world through 'his eyes', where the chasm between the uncreated and created was removed through the Incarnation of the Son 'begotten before all ages'. Man may only in this case *hope* for the union with God in his Kingdom, but without explication of the miracle of its own creation. Communion thus becomes such a change in the *tropos* (the way) of existence, when the world loses its sense of a hostile terrain and the source of 'evil'.

Christ, being fully human, experienced the same predicaments as all created men, but unlike all men, he knew that coping with these predicaments proceeded from his being the Son of God. The Son of God enhypostasised himself in the conditions of the physical world and, being fully human, he knew what it meant to be a creature and he transferred knowledge of this to humanity. The key point to the manifestation of Christ's creaturehood was his Crucifixion that showed the whole scale tragedy of being subjected to the law of death. The way to be 'man in communion with God' is to follow Christ through his life in the created human condition and comprehending the whole universe through his Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and ever being on the right hand of the Father. The major point here is experience of being created in the conditions of communion, or to be chained to the physical world whilst longing for freedom from the conditioned on the grounds of man's archetype in Christ. Thus, the human predicament expressed in the paradox of subjectivity receives its elucidation from the Christ-event, being the only possible theological reference in the hermeneutics of the ambivalent created condition of humanity.

In spite of Christ's moral teaching through centuries of the recent history, the Incarnation of God is not an accidental event that happened in order to heal human faults (for example, human inability to see the creator through creation,[28] thus not

[27] Yannaras, *The Enigma of Evil*, 16.
[28] See, for example, Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 3:11, 12.

following God). As that part of creation envisioned by God from the beginning, the human predicament of ambivalent existence in the universe was implanted in the very logic of creation by confirming once again that the main delimiter in answering the question 'What is man?' proceeds from his creaturehood. Man cannot answer the question 'What is man?' because he cannot create himself. By understanding this, he is predisposed to communion and acquisition of grace that confirms that man is not only a natural being, but a Divine image.

And it is through science, which is a particular modus of the Divine image in man, that man understands the dimensions of his created condition not from the side of the negative connotations of the paradox of subjectivity, but, in fact, related to the whole logic of creation. It is science that makes it possible to understand that it is the descent of God into the universe that predetermines the contingent facticity of the universe that accommodates man. For the Word-Logos of God to assume human flesh, there *must be* this flesh. Since modern physics and biology are clear with respect to the necessary conditions of existence for such flesh requiring at least ten billion years of cosmological evolution, it seems evident that for the Incarnation to take place the *necessary* physical conditions must have been fulfilled. To have a body of Christ and his Mother (Virgin Mary), the universe must have had from the beginning the propensity to produce them. Correspondingly, the ontological aspect of the Incarnation is always present in the reversed history of the universe as it is described in modern cosmology.[29] According to T. Torrance, the whole surrounding world, being created *freely* in an act of Love between the Persons of the Holy Trinity, exhibits *contingent necessity* related to its physical structure, its space and temporal span, encoding the motive of the Incarnation (and hence man) in the fabric of creation.[30] These observations change a stance on the position of man in the cosmos, releasing him from the mediocrity and insignificance of his physical existence. The question 'What is man?' receives its elucidation through the adoption of a new vision that the very existence of man was 'implanted' in the fabric of creation, whose logic presupposes bringing creation to communion with God through man. If the motive of the Incarnation is linked to the logic of creation, man as a particular segment of creation becomes inextricably intertwined with the rest of creation. Since the actual historical Incarnation happened in the midst of the human subset of the universe (recapitulating the universe on the level of consubstantiality and epistemological acquisition), its proper sense can be directly related to the constitution and meaning of the cosmos, in which humanity itself is no longer positioned on the periphery of the created universe but in its centre as immanent intentionality of creation. However, one must not treat the Incarnation and the very existence of intelligent humanity as metaphysically predetermined in creation.

[29] These conditions are summarised in various versions of the Anthropic Principle (AP), which detects consubstantiality of the physical stuff of the universe and human corporeal beings.

[30] T. Torrance, *Divine and Contingent Order* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998).

One can only assert that indeed the logic of creation contained the *necessary* conditions for existence of intelligence and hence the Incarnation. The *sufficient* conditions for both human intelligence and the Incarnation can only be detected through the actual happening of the Incarnation, thus providing us with their transcendent references (*paradeigmata*). The *sufficient* conditions for the Incarnation are not part of the underlying ontology of the world and here the *revelational* aspect of the Incarnation that enters the discussion framed in terms of the inauguration of the Kingdom of God. This is to say that the Incarnation is not part of the *natural conditions* in the world. Even if the world was created by God in order to attain union with God, it is humanity that is granted the means of such an attainment through a special call. The possibility of such an attainment effectively contributes to the definition of man: only in communion with God man becomes 'himself'.[31] In this sense man, in spite of being consubstantial to the visible creation[32] and having solidarity with it, is a special creation whose essence requires *grace*, and the mechanism of acquiring this grace proceeds through the Incarnation. Then one can see that the proper theological input in the dialogue of theology with the sciences originates exactly in the archetypical predisposition (endowed by the incarnate Christ) of relating the visible universe to its transcendent foundation, given to humanity through the grace of the 'giver of life'.

If one generalises this, the dialogue between theology and science, as co-existence of different attitudes to the created world, has its archetype in the Incarnate Christ, for whom the predicament of the dialogue did not exist because this dialogue was Christ's own creation in the same sense as the world and its scientific exploration were created by him. The difference in attitude to the world (present in theology and science) was introduced by Christ in order to teach man about the *meaning of creaturehood in the conditions of communion with God*. Being in human flesh, Christ as the Logos-creator had to hold the image of the physically disjoint universe in one single consciousness as an intelligible (noetic) entity. Thus, the unity of the created world, being split in itself as the sensible and intelligible, becomes the pivotal indication of the sense of the created. This split in the representation of man by himself (as the composite unity of the empirical and intelligible) indicated in the paradox of subjectivity cascades towards the split between science and theology, pointing towards the fact that neither empirical nor theoretical knowledge of the universe can receive any justification for their contingent facticity if the ultimate source if this facticity is not sought in the logic of creation. Thus, the dialogue between theology

[31] As was expressed by J. Zizioulas, one cannot identify man through a syllogistic formula 'man=man', which, if one follows a philosophical logic, contains a pointer beyond itself towards the definition of man as 'man=man-in-communion-with-God' (J. Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 248).

[32] According to modern cosmology, the human body, consisting of atoms, effectively interacts with only 4% of all matter in the universe, remaining de facto non-consubstantial to the remaining 96%, which allegedly consists of Dark Energy and Dark Matter.

and science can be treated as an outward manifestation of the radical createdness of humanity wrestling with its own incapacity to control its own ends, as well the ends of the world. It is not difficult to guess that such a dialogue is an open-ended enterprise, having no metaphysical accomplishment and hence having sense only as contributing to the infinite hermeneutics of the created human condition.

One can be tempted to link the unknowability of man by himself—and the paradox of subjectivity—not to the issue of creaturehood, but to the conditions of the Fall as if the ambivalence in the human condition formulated in the paradox proceeds from the loss of memory of 'all in all' (Eph. 4:6) in the post-lapsarian state. Correspondingly, the resolution of the paradox could be associated with reacquiring the state of the first man Adam. However, this cannot be true, because the first man was also created and his knowledge of 'all in all', implanted in his Divine likeness, did not guarantee him being able to reproduce himself in a manner he was created by God. The crucial moment in explicating man's unknowability is Christ who, by being God and fully human, elucidates to man the sense of man's created condition, the sense which, as such, was obscured by the Fall. The traditional link between the Fall and the Incarnation is that the latter is treated as a redeeming act of God towards saving the transgressing humanity. However, Orthodox theology points towards a connection between creation and the Incarnation, as being, *de facto*, a *necessary and sufficient* condition for the created to be brought to union with God. In other words, the motive of the Incarnation is linked to the aim of creation.[33] According to Maximus the Confessor, the creation of the world contained the goal for which all things were created: 'For it is for Christ, that is, for the Christic mystery, that all time and all that is in time has received in Christ its beginning and its end'.[34] It is in this sense that the motives of creation and the Incarnation are inextricably intertwined and this, theologically (and in addition to the cosmological findings), points to the fact that the phenomenon of man is intrinsically linked to the motive of creation. Man was created in the universe, and because of his createdness he experiences his Divine image through the unknowability and ambivalence of existence. From here one can conclude that *the dichotomy between theology and science is thus an inevitable characteristic of man's creaturehood, so that the sought reconciliation of theology and science is impossible in the human condition to the same extent as the overcoming of the ontological (not moral) division between creation and God in the process of deification*.

By linking the motive of the Incarnation to the intrinsic logic of creation of the world by God, Orthodox theology extends the scope of the Incarnation beyond

[33] According to G. Florovsky, 'An adequate answer to the "motive" of the Incarnation can be given only in the context of the general doctrine of Creation.' G. Florovsky, '*Cur Deus Homo?* The motive of the Incarnation', in *Creation and Redemption*, The collected works of Georges Florovsky , vol. III, (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland Publishing Company, 1976), 170.

[34] Maximus the Confessor, *Questions to Thalassius*, 60.

the opposition of Fall-Redemption towards a wider span of the plan of salvation as related to the deification of man and bringing the whole of creation to the union with God. The lesser arch of the Fall-Redemption becomes a tool in restoring the greater arch of Creation-Deification.[35] A famous phrase from Athanasius that God 'assumed humanity that we might be made God'[36] implies that humanity, being created, has the potential to be in union with God (not based in the natural laws related to creation). One can say more emphatically that a creaturely modus of existence becomes unavoidable for the very possibility of deification. Correspondingly, if God's plan 'consists in deification of the created world' (some parts of which imply salvation), the plausibility of the plan of deification is rooted in the fact that man is ontologically united with created nature. Man is the 'microcosm who resumes, condenses, recapitulates in himself the degrees of the created being and because of this he can know the universe from within'.[37] In this sense Orthodox theology links the Incarnation to humanity as that subset of the created universe that is capable of playing a mediating role in overcoming moral tensions between different parts of creation, creation, and God.[38] The mediation between moral divisions in creation explicates the sense of being created and the delimiters of deification: the union with God through these mediations does not remove the basic ontological difference (*diaphora*) between the world and God thus not removing the riddle of man, retaining his basic definition as being *a creature in communion* with God.

The reader may be puzzled by such a paradoxical situation: indeed if one talks about deification as the union with God, and deification is possible through the Incarnation, why man cannot achieve through this deification that state that was pertaining to Christ the Incarnate? The answer is: Christ hypostatically remained the Logos of God and was controlling his enhypostasisation in Jesus by being able to explicate his own human, that is created, nature. However, this is not given to man, so that the Incarnation remains an archetype of the human (Divine image/physical flesh = uncreated/created) predicament. At the same time, the Incarnation brings a kind of a *natural division* in our understanding of communion. According to Maximus the Confessor, the Incarnation brought the division in the temporal span of evolution of the universe onto two fundamentally different aeons: '…God wisely

[35] A. Louth, 'The place of *Theosis* in Orthodox theology', in *Partakes of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, M. J. Christensen and J. A. Wittung (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press), 34–35. The Incarnation 'showed us that this was why we were created, and that this was God's good purpose concerning us from before ages, a purpose which was realised through the introduction of another, newer mode' (Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua*, PG 91:1097C [ET: *On Difficulties in the Church Fathers. The Ambigua*. Vol. 1., ed. and tr. N. Constas, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014, 131–33]), that is the entrance of 'the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God [into] our world' (Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 8 [ET: p. 33]).

[36] Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* 54 [ET: p. 93].

[37] O. Clément, 'Le sense de la terre' *Le Christ terre des vivants. Essais théologiques. spiritualite orientale*, no. 17, (Bégrolles-en-Mauges: Abbaye de Bellfontaine, 1976), 90.

[38] See, for example, L. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), 387–427.

divided "the ages" between those intended for God to become human, and those intended for humanity to become divine'.[39] This excludes a possibility of treating the movement from creation to deification through the Incarnation as a 'natural process' inherent in the fabric of creation. On the one hand, created things participate in God through the fact of their existence; that is, through 'being in communion'. However, when Maximus enquires about the human capacity of deification, he stresses that it does not belong to man's natural capacity.[40] By separating the aeons before and after the Incarnation, Maximus differentiates between the participation in God that is bestowed on man by creation and the participation that is bestowed by deification. Said differently, the aeon after the Incarnation corresponds to the movement of man to God, whose very possibility was effected by the Incarnation, and whose actual exercise demands not only *communion through existence*, but *communion through grace*. Grace is not implanted in the natural conditions of existence but is bestowed by God on the grounds of man's personal extent of perfection. It is this grace that makes it possible for man to realise his ambivalence in the universe originating in creaturehood. It is this grace that makes it possible to enquire about the contingent facticity of the sciences thus initiating their dialogue with theology. It is this grace that makes theology possible as that constituent of knowledge that explicates the sense of the created humanity.

The Dialogue between Theology and Science as an Open-ended Hermeneutics of the Human Condition

The sciences implicitly articulate the outward sense of existence in communion (that is being created) through their very contingent facticity, that is through the fact that they are. The underlying foundation of the sciences is man, whose sense, nevertheless cannot be completely explicated either by the sciences or by philosophy. The sciences function in the conditions man's unknowability by himself. Theology encounters the sciences (and philosophy) in order to release man from an intellectual impasse of unknowability and to invite him to learn from his archetype in Christ that—in spite of his creaturehood—he remains in communion and has a potential to achieve the union with God for the sake of understanding that the unknowability and paradox remain the basic theological delimiters in man's self-awareness of his creaturehood.

The duality in the hermeneutics of the subject, transpiring through the dialogue between theology and science, originates in the basic feature of man related to his creaturehood: man exists in communion with God by the fact of his createdness, but he does not 'possess' himself entirely in the world even in tendency because

[39] Maximus the Confessor, *Ad Talassium* 22 [ET: P. M. Blowers, R. L. Wilken, *On the cosmic mystery of Christ* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 115].

[40] Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua 20*.

the conditions of *communion through grace* are not part of the world. Indeed, by detecting his ambivalent position in the world (the paradox of subjectivity), man discovers himself in the conditions of an intellectual impasse: that is, the incapacity to understand the contingent facticity of such a paradox as the delimiter of his embodied consciousness. Through attempts to find the metaphysical grounds for himself, man produces instead an infinite hermeneutics of his own predicament thus sensing that the very means of interrogation of himself by himself cannot be existentially clarified. Here, an inerasable Divine image in man invokes the latter to seek God's help and thus following God, that God who once descended in the world to teach man about his creaturehood in order to be deified.

The dialogue between theology and science represents an open-ended hermeneutics of the created human condition. The discourse of the paradox of subjectivity provides the delimiters for any of such hermeneutics. Since the riddle of unknowability of man by himself cannot be resolved in terms of metaphysical concepts, cascading down towards the irresolvable nature of the paradox, the dialogue between science and theology cannot hope to have any material goal as its accomplishment. The moral tension between man's created condition and his Divine image, as well as a capacity to receive the grace of deification, will keep the dialogue active and alive—always and forever—just confirming a simple existential truth that both science and theology originate in one and the same man, created in communion with God, but living in a moral tension between the sense of man's created limitedness and his graceful longing for the unconditional and immortal.