

GEORGIA APOSTOLOPOULOU

THE OPEN METAPHYSICS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE.
SOME EXAMPLES FROM MODERN GREEK PHILOSOPHY*

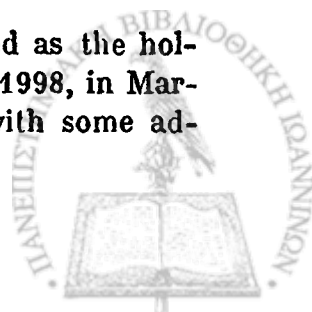
Outline

In this lecture, I shall present the main views of modern Greek philosophy for and against metaphysics, as they have developed over the last fifty years. The lecture is divided into four parts: In "Part One. For and Against Metaphysics" I sketch out the perspectives of modern Greek metaphysics. In the following parts I propound a critical examination of the positions of three representative philosophers, as far as they concern the possibility of metaphysics. My purpose is not to interpret the whole work of these philosophers from the viewpoint of metaphysics, but only to explicate their arguments for or against metaphysics as a distinguished philosophical enterprise. The titles of the other parts of this lecture are the following: "Part Two. Spyros Kyriazopoulos, The Critical Transposition from Substance to Existence," "Part Three. Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, The Open Way to Transcendence," "Part Four. Christos Yannaras, The Post-modern Affirmation of 'Meta-physics'. In the "Concluding Remarks" I point to the question of the meaning of human existence as the main question of modern Greek metaphysics in the face of modernity and postmodernity.

Part One. For and Against Metaphysics

The discourse of the "open metaphysics of human existence" that can be reconstructed from the works of modern Greek philoso-

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phers of the last fifty years, is characterized by two main features: On the one hand, it includes the critique of metaphysics as the fundamental philosophical science of Being. On the other hand, it represents a "metaphysics of undertones" that elaborates an answer to the question of the relationship of man and world beyond the modern collision of science and religion. This metaphysics could be considered as a "metaphysics from below", because it takes as its starting point not the "Beyond", or the eternal Being, but the care of human existence for its being-in-the-world.

This turn to metaphysics is no general trend of contemporary Greek philosophy at all. It is noteworthy that Evangelos Papanoutsos, who studied near Heinrich Maier and Erich Adickes, writes in the wake of the neo-Kantian aversion to metaphysics and does not provide any place for metaphysics in his "world of spirit", which consists merely in aesthetics, ethics and theory of knowledge¹. As Papanoutsos maintains, there is only an ontological aporia within the context of the theory of knowledge, which is expressed as the controversy between realism and idealism about the priority and the reality of the two terms of the cognitive relationship, namely of subject and object². This epistemological restriction on metaphysics implicates the reduction of truth to the logical and cognitive validity of judgment expressing the "equilibrium between matter and form, between data and categorical processing³. Judgments about Being as a whole do not possess any validity, because Being or reality as a whole cannot become the object of any science. Therefore, Papanoutsos excludes metaphysics as a science of Being from his own critical philosophy.

As a matter of fact, problems concerning the epistemological status, the basic categories and the method of metaphysics are not of equal relevance for all Greek philosophers of the last fifty years,

1. Evangelos P. Papanoutsos: *The World of Spirit. A. Aesthetics*. Fifth edition Athens, Ikaros, 1976 (in Greek). *The World of Spirit. B. Ethics*. Third edition. Athens, Ikaros, 1976 (in Greek). *The World of Spirit. C. Theory of Knowledge*. Third Edition. Athens, Ikaros, 1976 (in Greek). English translation of the third part: Evangelos P. Papanoutsos: *The Foundations of Knowledge*. Edited and with an Introduction by John P. Anton. Translated by Basil Coucis and John P. Anton. Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press, 1968.

2. Papanoutsos: *The Foundations of Knowledge*, op. cit. p. 5, and the whole of "Part One: Being and Consciousness", pp. 3. ff.

3. Papanoutsos op. cit. p. 158, cf. p. 273.



who have set out extensive theoretical accounts of metaphysics. For example, the Kant scholar Nikolaos Korkofigas considers metaphysics rather as a metaphilosophical vision of Greek spirit that encompasses in itself Greek philosophy and Christian faith, since both confirm the transcendent unity of cosmos, man and God throughout¹. Metaphysics really becomes the itinerary of the metaphysician from Greek philosophy to the God of cross and of resurrection, from theoretical reflection to the manifestation of the sacred². At the end, there is no more metaphysics, because it becomes integrated into eschatology, as far as the fulfillment of humanity happens beyond natural conditions through the elevation of humanity to the sacred.

As opposed to this perspective, Johannes Theodorakopoulos, a pupil of Heinrich Rickert and of Karl Jaspers, claims a strong theoretical version of metaphysics by arguing that "metaphysics aims at a scientific, systematically founded, rational worldview"³. Not sharing the reservations of his teachers about metaphysics, he combines Jaspers' philosophical belief in the worth of knowledge with Rickert's concept of worldview (*Weltanschauung*). Theodorakopoulos distinguishes between metaphysics as a perpetual spiritual need of human existence to understand the unity and the meaning of Being, and metaphysics as a rational answer to this question, as far as this answer emerges out of the cognitive activity of the human within history⁴. He attempts to preserve Aristotle's idea of metaphysics as the philosophical science of Being in the face of modern demand for cognitive achievements through scientific research, but the modifications he introduces leave some open questions. He defines Being as the main theme of metaphysics and highlights that God is the creator of Being. However he maintains that metaphysics has to establish the unity of Being as a posterior aspect according to the results of science, since Being exists only split into different kinds, such as matter, life and spirit without any primal unity⁵. Under these

1. Nikolaos D. Korkofigas: *Cosmos, Man and God. The Philosophical Belief of Hermit Metaphysician*. Athens, Private Edition, 1966 (in Greek).

2. Korkofigas op. cit. p. 557.

3. Johannes Theodorakopoulos: *Introduction to Philosophy. Vol. D. Philosophical Anthropology, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Religion*. Athens, Private Edition, 1975 (in Greek), p. 252.

4. Theodorakopoulos op. cit. pp. 244 ff.

5. Theodorakopoulos op. cit. pp. 211 and 215.

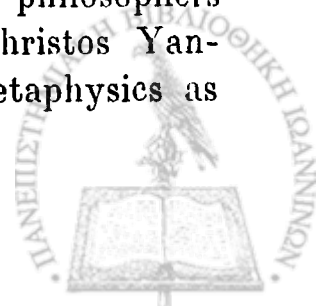


conditions, metaphysics continues the scientific discourse about the mundane reality and - against Theodorakopoulos' intentions - becomes absorbed by the same discourse, when the latter is completed as the scientific worldview.

The critical examination of these positions makes clear that the one-sided definition of metaphysics either in terms of religious belief or in terms of scientific rationality raises the question of the theoretical autonomy of metaphysics. If metaphysics has to explicate reality according to the plurality of differentiations and to the perspective of unity as well, it has to preserve the primal relationship of man and world. In a fully religious interpretation, as Korkofigas exposes it, human existence is concerned about its own eternal destiny and overlooks its being-in-the-world in such a way that it becomes worldless. In the case of rationalist interpretations, as Theodorakopoulos suggests, the primal relationship of man and world is reduced to the cognitive relationship of subject and object, while the subject almost becomes oblivious of its primal existential condition in favor of the objectivist worldview. Both concepts preserve metaphysics after and beyond the rationalist critique of metaphysics. Their common strategy could be called "the continuity of discourse". Korkofigas elaborates the continuity between metaphysical and theological discourse, while Theodorakopoulos shapes the continuity between scientific and metaphysical discourse.

These two positions indicate two possible directions of argumentation resulting from the encounter of modern Greek tradition with European modernity. The first direction starts from the conception that human existence can be described only in terms of personalist religious experience. This direction construes metaphysics as an interpretation of personalist and non-empirical meaning. The second direction starts from the cognitive achievement of subject and develops metaphysics as a theorizing on empirical causes and scientific results. For the second direction, the indispensable need for knowledge has an existential value, while religious experience is considered as the resource for understanding the ultimate destiny of human existence.

Whether these directions are separate paths or complementary views, constitutes the main question for the three Greek philosophers Spyros Kyriazopoulos, Panagiotis Kanellopoulos and Christos Yannaras, who for different reasons are cautious about metaphysics as



purely theoretical reasoning and investigate the relation between life and metaphysics.

Part Two. Spyros Kyriazopoulos, The Critical Transposition from Substance to Existence

Spyros Kyriazopoulos, who after his studies in Athens attended some of Heidegger's public lectures in Germany and made the acquaintance of Jaspers, undertakes the critique of metaphysics, in order to put aside the objectivist concept of substance and to interpret religious experience as the fundamental relationship between human existence and the transcendent Thou. This critique can be considered as an application of Heidegger's views about metaphysics as ontotheology. Heidegger maintains that metaphysics obscured the ontological difference, because metaphysics considered Being as the highest element, as another being among and beyond other beings, and took for truth merely the truth of beings and not the authentic truth of Being; by doing so, metaphysics misunderstood the relationship between Being and beings and attributed the priority to beings. But, while Heidegger considers Being as the main reference point of his thinking, Kyriazopoulos brings to the fore the question of God.

Kyriazopoulos possibly considered as an inspiring starting point for further investigation Heidegger's hypothetical question, whether Christian theology will have the courage to shake off the ontotheological burden, to deal with philosophy - that means with metaphysics - as with stupidity and deceit and to reject it¹. Anyway, Kyriazopoulos accepts Heidegger's statement, that Christian theology is ontotheology, namely, that Christian theology equalized God with some highest being. Kyriazopoulos uses the term "ontotheology" in a fully negative meaning² and accuses the whole Christian theology of "transforming God to one of the beings"³. As he maintains, the God of Christian theology is the "ontic God" who is an "analogue to being" and has "ontic qualities"⁴ and "ontic perfections"⁵.

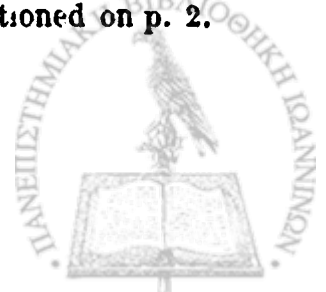
1. Martin Heidegger: *Was ist Metaphysik? Fünfte durch Einleitung und Nachwort vermehrte Auflage.* Frankfurt a. M., Klostermann, 1949 p. 18.

2. Spyros D. Kyriazopoulos: *Freedom and Self-transcendence.* Athens, Private Edition, 1962 (in Greek) pp. 8 and 140, cf. also the suggestion mentioned on p. 2.

3. Op. cit. p. 9.

4. Op. cit. p. 4.

5. Op. cit. p. 6.

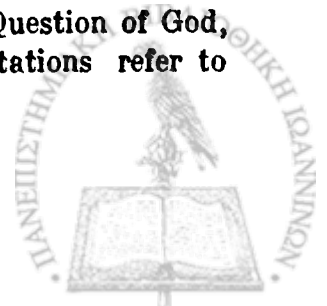


His argument is that Christian theology in cooperation with metaphysics leads to a deceptive extension of the immanent on the transcendent, which means a deceptive extension of the secular at the cost of transcendence. This critique is more than an epistemological critique of two disciplines, even if Kantian pattern of the distinction between the domain of the rational understanding ("Verstand") and the perspective of reasonable thinking ("Vernunft") is obvious. For, this critique is indeed the undermining of the history of metaphysics and of theology in their common product of onto-theology, and aims to liberate the original, authentic approach of human existence to God. Kyriazopoulos attacks primarily on Christian theology and the theological use and abuse of metaphysics, rather than the ancient Greek metaphysics. He states, that the ancient Greek philosophy, Aristotle excepted, always attempted to hold the concept of divinity separated from the concept of the different beings by arguing that divinity is inaccessible to the categories of knowledge. He adds that, the main examples of this attempt are Plato's interpretation of Being in the dialogue *Parmenides* and Plotinus' philosophy of the transcendent One¹. In this context, Plotinus is considered as the greatest philosopher of Beyond, because he turned his thinking to what is beyond history and moreover beyond the history of metaphysics.

However, the undermining of the history of metaphysics jeopardizes the notion of history altogether and with it, the justification of Kyriazopoulos' philosophical enterprise as well. Kyriazopoulos avoids this by distinguishing between authentic and false history. On the one hand, he defines history as the temporal exposition of human existence, if we consider human existence in reference to its transcendent origin. On the other hand, he explicates history as the decadent history of metaphysics. It is the exposition of human existence within the ambiguous temporality that justifies Kyriazopoulos' critique of the history of metaphysics, since the abolition of the history of metaphysics announces the eternal "metaphysicality" (Kyriazopoulos indicates the metaphysical dimension by using the Greek neologism "metaphysikotēs")². It seems that Kyriazopoulos

1. Spyros Kyriazopoulos: *Prolegomena to the Question of God*. Athens, Private edition, 1960 (in Greek) p. 20. This work has been published in a shorter form as an article; s. Spyros Kyriazopoulos: *Prolegomena to the Question of God*, in: *Theologia*, Athens, 30 (1959) pp. 459-491 and 649-685. Quotations refer to the edition of 1960.

2. Kyriazopoulos op. cit. p. 53.



follows Jaspers' view about the tension between the presence of the transcendent element within history and the tradition of metaphysics as an immanent event¹. Jaspers, however, recognizes the history of philosophy as a deposit of inexhaustible truth, while Kyriazopoulos' radical invocation of authenticity leads back to Heidegger's deconstruction of the history of metaphysics.

As a matter of fact, Kyriazopoulos is among the philosophers who accepted and applied Heidegger's schema of the decadent history of metaphysics in different forms. Among these philosophers is also Hanna Arendt who criticizes the history of politics up to her time. She maintains that authentic politics has been realized in the ancient Greek polis, while afterwards - in spite of some glimmers in history - it declined gradually and arrived to its end, when Marx replaced the "zoon politikon" - namely the human being as the political animal - by "animal laborans" and by so doing, Marx attributed the priority to labor at the costs of authentic politics². Hanna Arendt's conception starts from the remembrance of authentic politics and comes to a negative diagnosis of the future. Kyriazopoulos states that the question of God just in his time begins to gain its real dimensions, because just by this time philosophy had foreseen the trap of ontotheology. During the past, ontotheology as the metaphysical knowledge of God's substance carried the deceptive belief of having answered the question of God, but, as Kyriazopoulos highlights, it remained "far from transcendence"³. According to Kyriazopoulos, all the previous answers to the question of God have been only scanty attempts before the essential question; these scanty attempts did not discern that the main problem concerns the person who puts the question of God, because in encountering this question, the person itself is put into question; the person is asked about his or her relation to this question. So, the question of God involves a reversal of direction, since the question of God is word and event coming from the transcendent perspective of human existence⁴.

1. Cf. Karl Jaspers: *Philosophie*. Zweite, unveränderte Auflage. Berlin, Springer, 1948 pp. 682-683.

2. Hanna Arendt: *The Human Condition*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p. 320 ff.

3. Kyriazopoulos, op. cit. p. 192.

4. Op. cit. p. 12, see f.i. also pp. 1, 108, 196.



Kyriazopoulos deconstructs ontotheology by using concrete categories denoting the false answers to the question of God. So, the most important philosophical and theological positions are taken out of their historical context and are classified as samples of the ontotheological fallacy, denoted as either the affirmation, the negation, the identification, the identity, or the becoming of God's substance. The continuity of the history of philosophy and of theology from the Presocratics up to the philosophers and theologians of our century is demolished through this typology of fallacy, while a detailed critique is replaced by selective reference. Kyriazopoulos' revolt against history concerns all the historical forms of rationalism in metaphysics and theology and arises from the suspicion that rationalism slips inevitably toward secular alienation from the original relationship between existence and transcendence. His opinion is that the root of the ontotheological fallacy is situated in ancient Greek philosophy, but the fallacy became reality when Christian theologians used ancient Greek philosophy in order to construct a scientific exposition in the context of Christian faith.

It is characteristic that Kyriazopoulos rejects both positive and negative theology, because he considers them as forms of exaggerated rationalism changing into mythology. On the one hand, he maintains that Thomas Aquinas' positive theology attributes to God's substance so many positive qualities that it leads from transcendence to overpositivity¹. On the other hand, he argues that the negative theology of Dionysius Areopagita is a mixture of Christian and Neoplatonic views that displaces divinity to the stage of an "asiatic overdivinity"². Johannes Damascenus' exposition of the Christian Orthodox faith is considered a systematic synthesis representing the rationalist alienation from transcendence³. In any case, Kyriazopoulos maintains that negative theology has managed to put some limits to theological rationalism and to create free space for existential charismatic expressions of worship and prayer.

This iconoclastic approach is not unusual in the philosophy of our century. Its main teachers are Heidegger and Adorno. But Kyriazopoulos does not share their secular perspectives on authentic

1. Op. cit. p. 11; cf. the critique on p. 12.

2. Op. cit. p. 31; cf. the critique on p. 71, where positive and negative theology are considered as attempts of positive denotation.

3. Op. cit. p. 30.



events. He does not introduce either a new discourse as an alternative to religious narrative or the overcoming of ontotheology in terms of modernity. Between ontotheology and modernity, he is on the side of ontotheology. He accepts the argument that ancient Greek philosophy and medieval philosophy always attempted to answer the question of God in favor of God, while modern and contemporary philosophy—with a few exceptions—responds directly or indirectly in favor of the human and, consequently, they enable the self-deification of the human, that means the “hubris of the man of Western culture”¹. Between positive and negative theology, Kyriazopoulos is on the side of negative theology. He argues that negative theology as a moderate use of negation can protect in some way against the rationalist exaggerations of positive theology. However, if negative theology still follows its immanent negativism, it leads to the annihilation of the question of God and ends in nihilism and agnosticism, as it happened in the Western European culture². As he states, moderate negative theology was able to stop the formation of systematic expositions in Eastern Christianity and to bring into force adoration, doxology and prayer.

While avoiding rationalism, negativism and their aftermath, philosophy returns to the question of God and investigates the structure of questioning. The investigation does not concern the grammar or the syntax of questioning in general, but refers exclusively to the structure of the unique fundamental question: the question of God. It is through this question that we trace the overcoming of the static terms of judgment. The term “God” includes what Kyriazopoulos calls “the fundamental contradiction” consisting in the incommensurability between the mental representation of the concept of God on the one hand and the concept of God on the other hand³. Consciousness can achieve only the mental representation of this concept and never include the full content of this concept in a mental representation, because God is far away at his greatest proximity to us. So, consciousness refers to a concept that, while remaining beyond categorical processing, is nevertheless represented.

This contradiction allows some important conclusions about the limits of reason. If the concept of God is contradictory, it cannot

1. Op. cit. p. 196-197.

2. Op. cit. p. 34; cf. also p. 40; about the decrease of the ambitions for the formation of theological systems, cf. also pp. 81-82.

3. Op. cit. p. 200.



function as the subject of some judgment answering the question of God, because the logical structure of judgment is defined according to the principle of identity and not according to the principle of contradiction. If the concept of God includes the explicated contradiction, God cannot be considered as firm substance, because substance is defined either in terms of logic or in terms of metaphysics according to the principle of identity. However, God always is beyond; he is the super-eminent. Kyriazopoulos highlights that the concept of God cannot be included in metaphysical and theological systems, because these rational enterprises intend to abolish the contradiction and to reestablish the certainty of concept beyond all the contradictions. So, reason cannot sustain contradictions, but the elimination of the fundamental contradiction leads to fallacies¹. Metaphysics and onto-theology, positive and negative theology are possible and inevitable but they always are false and must be deconstructed.

Upon first view, the demolition of the judgment about God and the destabilization of all the discourses that answer to the question of God seem to lead Kyriazopoulos' thinking from negativism to agnosticism. Kyriazopoulos avoids this danger by taking the turn from the metaphysics of substance to phenomenology that investigates the fundamental contradiction, the structure of asking the question on God. According to Kyriazopoulos, if reason cannot live with contradictions and aims to consolidate knowledge through proofs, faith is the confirmatory experience of "metaphysicality"; it lives with and from the fundamental contradiction and becomes the existential performance and fulfillment². It is exactly the permanence of the question about God that indicates that what is primal is not some transcendent firm substance, but it is the fundamental relationship between the asking existence and God, to whom this question seems to be referred. Instead of the substantialist validity of judgment, the fundamental question manifests the dialogical perspective of the relationship of I and Thou that overcomes logic and remains the treasure of true religion³. In this way the cognitivist ambitions of rationality are undermined, metaphysics as "philosophia prima" is given up and the phenomenology of the fundamental contradiction can achieve the only possible prolegomena to the question of God.

1. Op. cit. pp. 201-202.

2. Op. cit. pp. 222-226.

3. Op. cit. p. 211; Cf. Kyriazopoulos: *Existence and Self-transcending* op. cit. p. 11.



*Part Three: Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, The Open Way Towards
Transcendence*

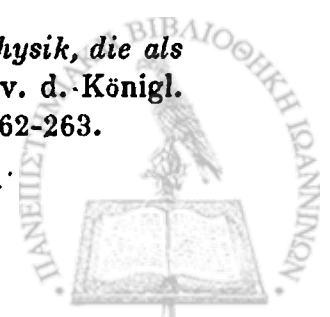
Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, who had studied together with his friend Theodorakopoulos near Rickert and Jaspers in Heidelberg, sets out a view of metaphysics that opposes the critique of metaphysics and the evasion of metaphysics, as well as of religion. In this way, he stands off from Rickert's Neokantianism and from Jaspers' philosophy of existence. But his main opponent is Kant, because Kant's philosophy brought to force the destruction of metaphysics in favor of scientific rationality. While Kyriazopoulos writes his *Prolegomena to the Question on God* (1959) in order to eliminate every possible affirmation of metaphysics, Kanellopoulos presents his *Prolegomena to Metaphysics* (1956) as a preamble and justification of metaphysics¹. As a matter of fact, such prolegomena are connected directly or indirectly with the critique of metaphysics and have their source in Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (1783). In his work, Kant offers a preliminary exercise of the changed metaphysics; this metaphysics is necessary according to him, because the older metaphysics that took the existence of the transcendent world for granted, was founded on logical errors and therefore was a fallacy². Kanellopoulos, however, criticizes Kant's *Prolegomena* as the preamble of a book Kant was not able to write in spite of his promise, because Kant had destroyed the whole content of his future book through his own philosophy³. He accuses Kant of reducing spirit to rationality and of eliminating the real meaning of philosophy and considers both of them as the results of Kant's turn from metaphysics to the theory of knowledge on the basis of his argument about the limits of reason.

Kanellopoulos' critique of Kant is no critique against rationality since rationality, reason, feelings, artistic creativity and faith are all supervised by spirit; it is only the critique of a series of distinctions and reductions that overlook that spirit is the metaphysical meaning, as well as the unity of the attitudes and mental activities intending

1. Panagiotis Kanellopoulos: *Prolegomena of Metaphysics. Man-World-God*. Athens, Private Edition, 1956 (in Greek) the foreword.

2. Immanuel Kant: *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können*, in: Kant's *Werke* Bd. IV, hrsgg. v. d. Königl. Preussischen Akademic der Wissenschaften. Berlin, Reimer, 1911 p. 262-263.

3. Kanellopoulos op. cit. p. 191.



this meaning¹. As Kanellopoulos argues, rationality refers to science, i.e. physics, and can reach up to the threshold of metaphysics, but it cannot enter metaphysics. Kant, however, transformed the methodological distinction between physics and metaphysics into an opposition of the physical and metaphysical world, the former being the necessary world, the latter the unnecessary, namely the superfluous world². According to Kanellopoulos, Kant was right in distinguishing that physics refers to the known and metaphysics concerns the unknown, but he was wrong in evaluating both the known and the unknown according to the criteria of scientific rationality and logic. Even if science and metaphysics are using logic, the fact is, metaphysics does not depend on the strict use of logic. On the contrary, such a procedure destroys metaphysics, as can be concluded from Kant's logical analysis of concepts. Since by considering, from the logical point of view, all the concepts as equal, namely without reality, Kant destroyed the concept of the highest being, meaning the concept of God³. In addition, Kant's logic of scientific investigation assumes that there is only one kind of experience connected with the a priori forms of rational understanding and valid within the physical world. As Kanellopoulos maintains, Kant forgets that there is also another kind of experience, namely the spiritual experience of the metaphysical meaning; this experience is inherent in the human spirit and does not depend on logic, but rather overcomes logic⁴.

Kanellopoulos admits that the critique of reason is possible, but he thinks that the limits of reason are no inviolate boundaries, as Kant supposed, because religious meditation, poetry, and music transcend the limits of reason and are not outside the truth. If we take into consideration the intentionality of spirit towards metaphysical meaning, then, the distinctions between the different functions of spirit have rather a hermeneutic relevance and may not imply the exclusive priority of one of them. So, the logical function is not the only function of spirit, as the theory of knowledge argues. If a critique of reason is possible, a critique of imagination is impossible. Kanellopoulos points to poetry, music, and faith as samples of the translogical activity that supports the metaphysical approach to the inconceivable⁵.

1. Op. cit. p. 191.

2. Op. cit. p. 37.

3. Op. cit. p. 258.

4. Op. cit. p. 22.

5. Op. cit. pp. 55 and 260.



As a matter of fact, Kanellopoulos has formulated the most consistent critique of Kant of any other modern Greek philosopher. His arguments remind us of the critiques developed by the post-Kantian philosophers against Kant at the end of eighteenth century and at the beginning of nineteenth century. In both cases, Kant's world is considered to be the world of the centralized yet finite subject that gives up its other-relatedness and responds to the question of God by abolishing it. Kanellopoulos still understands Kant's philosophy as the paradigm of antimetaphysics, which is not far from pure materialism¹. He maintains that Kant's transcendentalism leads philosophical reason to an impasse. Kant's world seems to him as the closed edifice ruled only by necessity, in which freedom has no place and exists merely as transcendental idea beyond necessity and experience². When Kant mentions that the inconceivable is the abyss of reason, he eliminates the essence and the possibilities of human spirit, because spirit goes forward only by attempting to understand and to express the inconceivable in philosophy, poetry, music, and faith³. Kant puts at the center of his philosophy, which means at the center of the critique of knowledge, the human mind, whose knowledge is limited, and ignores God, since the supposed limits of reason close off from the way towards transcendence⁴. In this context, the critique is addressed also against the Enlightenment's conception of human reason gaining its validity through anti-religious and anti-metaphysical arguments. Kanellopoulos takes the turn from transcendental paradigm to a weak version of metaphysical paradigm by claiming an a priori reasonable intimation that justifies the question of the relationship between man, world and God as an existential question.

This existential version of metaphysics includes the personalist experience that enables the encounter between the intra-philosophical truth of metaphysics and the extra-philosophical truth of religion. Nevertheless, the traces of Kant's critique of metaphysics are obvious, because Kanellopoulos does not return to the strong version of metaphysics of substance, but he introduces the subjective experience of the openness towards transcendence and, at the same time,

1. Op. cit. p. 260.

2. Op. cit. pp. 38-39.

3. Op. cit. p. 260.

4. Op. cit. p. 19; cf. p. 257.



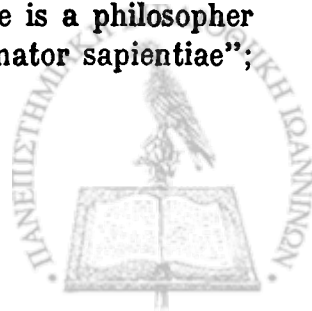
indicates a path beyond cognitivism and rationalism. So, true metaphysics is more than essential philosophy. It is an itinerary of the human spirit towards the absolute unknown and intends to manifest truth. It overcomes necessity and lives from miracle, because it is an essential relationship to the infinite, to God as the source of life and of meaning.

While defining philosophy, Kanellopoulos follows Augustine and Plato. Augustine's view that philosophy is man's friendly inclination to God becomes Kanellopoulos' starting point for the critique of subjectivism and for the definition of the main topics of metaphysics¹. On the one hand, God's wisdom enforces man to become aware of the limits of human knowledge, as far as it concerns knowledge of the world and self-knowledge. On the other hand, God is the source of life and of meaning, his wisdom is objectified in the universe, and metaphysics is the search of God and the exposition of this search. Regardless of whether philosophical reason begins its investigation from the self, from the world, or from God, it always returns to its center, to God, because of the primal interrelation ruling reality. Therefore, true philosophy cannot have as its center man's reason, as the Enlightenment of eighteenth century and Kant himself erroneously thought. It is characteristic that Kanellopoulos considers truth as the aim of metaphysics and distinguishes it from the exactness of science, to which the criteria of logic and of mathematics can be applied².

The distinction between truth and exactness and the refutation of both the Aristotelian and the Kantian ideal of categorical processing seem to reduce the possibilities of defining the method of metaphysics. Actually, Kanellopoulos does not look for another method in the strict, rationalist sense of this word, but he looks for the authentic road of searching for the truth. For this purpose, he comes back to Plato's dialogue *Timaios* and interprets Plato's view about the "probable myth" (*eikos mythos*) as the "highest possible philosophical thinking," that is analogous to what he himself calls "phi-

1. Op. cit. p. 19; s. Augustinus, *De civ. dei* VIII, 1: "verus philosophus est amator dei". In *De civ. dei* VIII, 2 Augustine mentions that he is a philosopher and cites Pythagoras' words "philosophus id est studiosus vel amator sapientiae"; cf. also *Conf.* III, 4 and 7.

2. Kanellopoulos op. cit. pp. 75-76.



philosophical intimation"¹. This method is the course from conjecture to conjecture, from suggestion to suggestion, from question to question. It begins where our possibilities of logical investigation and dialectical exactness finish, while its own end is situated in the infinite². Kanellopoulos limits the demand of strict logical consequence by invoking existential authenticity, but at the same time, he undermines the possibility of the affirmative truth of metaphysical discourse. While transferring the entirety of truth to God's wisdom, he faces the paradox that metaphysical discourse does not include either truth or certainty and yet, in spite of this, metaphysical discourse is the itinerary towards truth without achieving truth. Kanellopoulos avoids the demand of the epistemological corroboration of metaphysics since he locates metaphysics between science and religion. The purpose of science is the final theory about the known, while metaphysics remains the half-finished theory about the whole of reality, because science, that means physics, "always has to verify its ending, and metaphysics has to verify its beginning"³. Their boundaries are common, because these are boundaries between known and unknown, but their ways are different. In addition, religion is the realm of the metaphysical experience about the essence of human life beyond death and time and offers metaphysics the possibility of considering the world in the context of the primal relation of man, world, and God.

Under these conditions, philosophical intimation does not have the epistemological function that, for instance, the conjectures have for Popper's fallibilism⁴. According to Kanellopoulos' argumentation philosophical intimation is connected with the recollection of the human to itself; metaphysics is the anamnestic reconstructing of the relation of the self to God, since world is merely between self and God⁵. So, metaphysics is the spiritual need for authenticity and not a pure task of theorizing on the meaning of the whole of reality. In Kanellopoulos' view metaphysics is the intermediate discourse between scientific theory and religious revelation, and functions as the discourse of existential uncertainty between the certainty of know-

1. Kanellopoulos op. cit. p.; cf. Plato, *Tim.* 29 B-C.

2. Kanellopoulos op. cit. pp. 75-76.

3. Op. cit. the foreward.

4. Karl Raimund Popper: *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. Second edition revised. New York, Harper and Row, 1968.

5. Kanellopoulos, op. cit. p. 43.

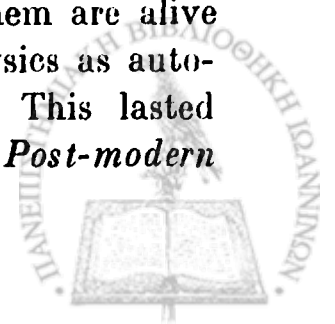


ledge and the truth of faith. On the one hand, metaphysics preserves the remembrance of human finitude. On the other hand, it becomes "praeparatio existentialis" for the acceptance of Christian faith.

So, the philosophizing existence develops a discontinuous metaphysical discourse learning from scientific theory and religious narrative without claiming to unify scientific exactness, metaphysical truth and religious authenticity. The disparity between science, metaphysics and religion allows their coexistence and manifests the disparity between natural, existential and eschatological time. On its way home, existence always moves beyond the world. Since metaphysics has as its central question the question of God, world and history are secondary and timelessness is established as the highest value of metaphysics. In this context, history does not become a question for metaphysics, even if the difference of lifetimes and biographies does not allow humans to realize the path to truth in the same time. It is exactly the asynchronic character of the individual paths that demands the reevaluation of this world as the home of others, even if concrete existence overcomes this world in terms of Kanellopoulos' metaphysics.

*Part Four. Christos Yannaras, The Post-modern Affirmation of
"Meta-physics"*

Kyriazopoulos and Kanellopoulos criticize the destruction of the concept of God in the theological and philosophical tradition of Western Europe, but they do not develop an extensive critique of modernity and their theoretical accounts could be considered as metaphysics in search of religion. Both have contributed to the discussion for and against metaphysics in the face of modernity as also Papanoutsos, Korkofigas and Theodorakopoulos have done. The year 1976 can be defined as the conclusion of this discussion because in this year Papanoutsos' work, *The World of Spirit*, was edited for the last time and because all the mentioned philosophers had published their books on metaphysics before 1976, while none of them are alive today. It seemed afterwards that the claim for metaphysics as autonomous philosophical endeavor belonged to the past. This lasted until 1993, when Christos Yannaras published his work, *Post-modern*



*metaphysics*¹. and opened the discussion about the possibility of metaphysics within the postmodern condition.

Yannaras has studied theology and philosophy in Greece and abroad and, among contemporary Greek philosophers, is the one who supports the perspective of the unifying discourse of philosophy and Christian Orthodox theology in terms of critical reflection and of self-conscious faith. In this discourse, philosophy is subordinated under theological truth in such a way, that the main problems of philosophy are accepted as genuine questions of human existence, but they are transformed and investigated within the theological context. Nevertheless, the enlargement of theological discourse is connected with the critical reconstruction of philosophy from an existential point of view consisting in the human concern about the ontological endurance of beings and in human's desire for everlasting life². As a matter of fact, the core of the existential point of view is prior to philosophical theorizing and in the same time makes up the measure against rationalist exaggerations. As Yannaras reminds us, the human desire for a life after death is expressed and preserved in all the religions and functions as the basis of the view of life. Furthermore, he stresses that questioning on the meaning of beings is the main problem of authentic philosophy, first of all, of ancient Greek philosophy³.

Yannaras indeed applies the above mentioned critical reconstruction only towards ancient Greek philosophy. He considers ancient Greek philosophy as the source of genuine metaphysical questioning and in the same time as the origin of essentialist answer. On the one hand, he accepts Aristotle's question on "being qua being" and evaluates it as a genuine question concerning the ontological endurance of beings⁴; on the other hand, he does not follow Aristotle's theology but he maintains that the principle of reality is the "calling principle", which means the principle speaking and inviting the human to transcend the fate of death by sharing the grace of the Beyond⁵.

1. Christos Yannaras, *Post-modern Meta-physics*. Athens, Domos, 1993 (in Greek).

2. Op. cit. pp. 85-86.

3. Op. cit. pp. 194-195.

4. Op. cit. p. 14.

5. Op. cit. p. 193.



However, we may note that Aristotle's conception of the Divine excludes the pure naturalist exaggeration and the essentialist one as well, since in Aristotle's universe the desire towards the Divine holds the metaphysical order of life by promoting the realization of the intrinsic telos of every being¹. Actually, it is Plato, who interpreted the pure desire (eros) as the openness of human existence towards the idea of beauty and consolidated in this way the metaphysical endurance of the human self². Afterwards this conception of primal intentionality towards the highest source of meaning became a main issue of the traditions of Platonism.

Yannaras shares this conception, but he proposes a postmodern interpretation in terms of Lacan's explication of pure desire of everlasting life, that means of transcending death³. Yannaras does not consider desire as intentionality but he understands it as the primal relationship between the human existence and the absolute Other, that is characterized as "the calling principle". As known, relationship is a logical category, the ontological status of which ought to be explicated.

Yannaras rejects the essentialist interpretation and the epistemological one, who had functioned as key interpretations in the philosophy of previous time. The essentialist interpretation stresses the external relationship of two substances consisting in itself, while the epistemological interpretation points to the subject-object relationship in terms of the theory of knowledge. However, Yannaras preserves the ontological character of relationship; at the same time he detaches the subject from the epistemological context and defines it as the "existing subjectivity" conceiving itself in terms of otherness⁴. According to Yannaras, relationship is the primal relationship between the existing subjectivity and the highest Other, that means the Other as the "calling principle"⁵. Nevertheless, the relationship has a real basis, on the one hand, on the desire of existing subjectivity and on the other hand on the calling addressed by the highest Other to existing subjectivity. Under these conditions, relationship is the real

1. Aristot. *Met.* 1072 b 3-4.

2. Plat. *Symp.* 211 A-E.

3. Yannaras op. cit. p. 84. He mentions Jacques Lacan, *Le seminaire XI*. Paris, Seuil, 1973 p. 180, where Lacan talks about a kind of pure libido. See also p. 102.

4. Yannaras op. cit. pp. 52, 62.

5. Op. cit. pp. 234 and 239.



meta-physical openness, since it exists beyond the natural fate of death.

The broader justification of this metaphysics consists in the demand of the turn from modernity to postmodernity, from the oblivion of the Beyond to the reconsideration of the riddle of existing subjectivity. Yannaras has often criticized modernity, but in his book on metaphysics the critique is so detailed and radical that a defender of modernity could characterize it as a defamation of the entire project of modernity. But Yannaras could take the opposite position in comparison to such a defender, because Yannaras does not consider the idea of autonomy to be the most important aspect of modernity; he instead emphasizes the vacuum of meaning as the main feature of modernity¹. According to Yannaras' diagnosis, modernity is a declining historical and cultural situation that has no heritage to leave to coming generations. Of course, this negative diagnosis includes the challenge of being for and against history and Yannaras is against the history of Western Europe, because he considers it as the history of rise and fall of an alienated ontology.

As Yannaras argues, in the European Middle Ages and in European modernity itself, the adventures of metaphysics have led to the abolition of the question of meaning of human existence. It seems that Yannaras distinguishes between ontology as a theory of ontological relation on the one hand and metaphysics on the other hand. But still metaphysics as a theoretical account about God, man, death or immortality must be distinguished according to its relation to physics. So, when in modernity metaphysics is rejected as an illusion about entities that are not accessible to the categories of physics, it means that physics has replaced metaphysics and defined the categories according to which the meaning of life must be investigated and eliminated². On the other hand, when metaphysics claims to take into consideration the probability of the existence of another world where physics does not assert its categories, then metaphysics is the appropriate postmodern investigation of this other world in terms of ontological reflection³. Therefore, the definition of ontology and metaphysics presupposes the considerations of the concrete historical epoch and of physics.

1. Op. cit. pp. 79ff.

2. Op. cit. p. 20.

3. Op. cit. p. 240.



Yannaras maintains that during the Middle Ages ontology had the priority as a strategy of religious interpretation of the world as a whole and as a form of ideological legitimation of priorities of this world. It was rather imposed than accepted and functioned as a substitute for empirical knowledge¹. The transition from the Middle Ages to modernity takes place as a "rupture" with the previous era and as a critique of religion, because people demanded to be liberated from the false priorities of the Middle Ages. The result of this rupture was, at the beginning, a reversal of the relationship between ontology and empirical knowledge, but with further development and with the increasing dominance of physics, this rupture resulted in the definition of the categories for the description of world, as well as the demarcation of the boundary between knowledge and illusion. So, in modernity ontology is lost, because it is understood *sensu stricto* as *meta-physics*, as illusion beyond physics. As Yannaras explicates, modernity is the era of the substitution of the meaning of life, in such a way that this meaning becomes marginal and the myriad of different interpretations offered by modernity deprive the human being of its dignity². Yannaras supports a paradigm shift from modernity to postmodernity³, which could allow the development of a post-modern metaphysical ontology investigating the essence of the existential fact in relation to the highest Other.

Yannaras develops a double textual style consisting in continuous writing and paragraphic aphorisms and in fixating the subversion of the I's identity and discursivity. This is a double strategy pointing to the two stages of the destabilization of the I. In the first stage, the strong and self-confident I prepares its destabilization by deconstructing the alienating exaggerations of the theological rationalism of "Western Christianity" and of the scientific physicalism of "European modernity". The grim struggle is carried out by using the continuous writing against the deductive systematic explications about the stability of nature and of self-consciousness. In the second stage, the I discovers and asserts the significance of its own non-identity emerging from the ruins of modernity. What is discovered is the presence of the lack of the Other, while what is asserted is the love of the Other.

1. Op. cit. p. 15.

2. Op. cit. p. 19.

3. Op. cit. p. 242.



Actually, the assertion is a negative one and has the character of a semantic shift. On the one hand, the assertion means the destabilization of the continuous discourse about the I, since the non-identity implies the overcoming of I and the appearance of the human subject dislocating its identity from the I to the Other. On the other hand, the alteration towards paragraphic aphorisms elevates the semantic separation between signifier and signified through the emphasis on the extra-textual perspective of the love for the Other. Nevertheless, Yannaras does not intend to return to the views of the romantic movement about the paragraphic aphorism as a fragment of inaccessible truth, but he indicates that Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* with its chain of paragraphs represents the post-modern possibility of semantic inquiry overcoming the inflexibility of modernist language.

In this context, the paradigm shift from modernity to postmodernity leads to the "postmodern metaphysical ontology" that brings to the fore a theological conception of the Other in terms of relationship and love. The origins of this conception are located outside the "agon" of Western modernity and postmodernity, but also outside the tradition of "Western Christianity". Yannaras writes from another "locus" of Christianity, namely from that of the Byzantine tradition, that did not fall to the alienation from genuine metaphysics, as it happened in "Western Christianity", according to his understanding. His experimental exposition of metaphysical ontology could be characterized as a form of Cappadocian postmodernism, because it includes as its core the description of the Other in the wake of the Trinitarian theology developed by the three Church Fathers: Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa. The three Church Fathers start their theological reflection from the concreteness of the three divine persons of the Holy Trinity. They say that God is one nature in three persons, or one essence in three hypostases; but at the same time they assume that we cannot say what God is or what the three divine persons are. They consider that "nature" could only be described in the sense of the divine persons' relationship to each other. In addition, they contend that we cannot ascribe attributes to the divine persons, since they become known through their divine energies. These two aspects - the relationship and the divine energies - constitute a strong break from the classical metaphysics of substance.



Concluding Remarks

The above examination makes clear that the modern Greek philosophers of the last fifty years, who affirm metaphysics as a philosophical endeavor, preserve the Aristotelian idea of metaphysics, while they at the same time oppose Aristotle, whom they consider one of the main leaders of rationalism. As a matter of fact, they are against the rationalistic demand of explaining the meaning of the world in terms of scientific rationality and of logical formation. They are neither against rationality nor against science. They take into account the results of science, but they are against the exaggerations of scientism that would or should replace religion and metaphysics. They criticize Western Christianity and modernity, because the latter have developed the metaphysical and theological rationalism in such an extreme way, requiring the replacement of metaphysics with a secular worldview in terms of scientific rationality. Therefore, they consider their metaphysics as being closer to Plato's view concerning the existential attitude towards eternity and emphasize the unity of sacramental-aesthetic and theological-philosophical aspects of Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

Their theoretical accounts of metaphysics could be characterized as forms of postcognitivist metaphysics that emphasize the openness of metaphysical discourse towards scientific theory and research, as well as towards religious narrative. Anyway, metaphysical questions are more actual in the Greek philosophy of today than is metaphysics proper as a theoretical account. For instance, Evangelos Moutsopoulos has proposed a comprehensive theory of spirit in terms of structural phenomenology with a dynamic perspective and investigates -among other themes- the metaphysical problem of pointed time ('*kairos*')¹. On the other hand, Mrs. Teresa Pentzopoulou-Valalas intends to clarify the possibility of metaphysics today by reevaluating Aristotle's theology and Heidegger's ontology². Anyway, the philosophical landscape of Greece of today is characterized

1. S. Evangelos Moutsopoulos: *The Course of Spirit*. vol. 1, *The Beings*. Athens, Editions Hermes, 1974; vol. 2, *The Ideas*. Athens, Editions Hermes, 1975; vol. 3, *The Values*. Athens, Editions Hermes, 1977 (in Greek), and his work: *Philosophy of Pointed Time*. Athens, Kardamitsa, 1984 (in Greek).

2. S. Teresa Pentzopoulou-Valalas: *Aristotle's Theology*. Thessalonike, Aristotle University of Thessalonike, 1980 (in Greek), and her work: Heidegger, *The Philosopher of Talk and Silence*. Thessalonike, Kyriakides, 1991 (in Greek).



by the plurality of problems and of investigations. Science, language, art, political community and moral action are the main problems of philosophy, while a great deal of philosophical investigation is dedicated to exploring our heritage from Greek antiquity to Byzantine time and our further movement to modernity. Nevertheless, modern Greece lives from and with a great view of the world rather than from a great theory of the world. Therefore, metaphysics will provide the only possibility for combining the view of the world and the theory of the world, and it will still remain open to religious narrative.



ΓΕΩΡΓΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ

Η ΑΝΟΙΧΤΗ ΜΕΤΑΦΥΣΙΚΗ ΤΗΣ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΝΗΣ ΥΠΑΡΞΗΣ. ΠΑΡΑΔΕΙΓΜΑΤΑ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΝΕΟΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ*

(Π ε ρ ί λ η ψ η)

Οι απόψεις των νεοελλήνων φιλοσόφων για την δυνατότητα της μεταφυσικής ως αυτοτελούς και θεμελιώδους φιλοσοφικής επιστήμης δεν είναι ενιαίες. Ο Ευάγγελος Παπανούτσος αποκλείει την μεταφυσική από τον κόσμο του πνεύματος, ενώ ο Νικόλαος Κορκοφίγκας την θεωρεί ως το μεταφιλοσοφικό όραμα του ελληνικού πνεύματος, το οποίο περιλαμβάνει την αρχαία ελληνική φιλοσοφία και την χριστιανική πίστη. Ο Ιωάννης Θεοδωρακόπουλος προβάλλει μιά θεωρητική εκδοχή της μεταφυσικής ως κοσμοθεωρίας. Εκ πρώτης όψεως, η μεταφυσική φαίνεται να είναι είτε μιά ερμηνεία του προσωποκρατικού και μη εμπειρικού νοήματος είτε μιά θεωρία που αξιοποιεί τα εμπειρικά αίτια και τα επιστημονικά πορίσματα. Ωστόσο οι συγκεκριμένες εκδοχές της μεταφυσικής, οι οποίες παρουσιάζονται στην συνέχεια και αναφέρονται ρητώς στην μεταφυσική ως αυτοτελή φιλοσοφική επιστήμη, χαρακτηρίζονται από περισσότερες κριτικές διαφοροποιήσεις.

Η εκδοχή του Σπύρου Κυριαζόπουλου μπορεί να χαρακτηριστεί ως η κριτική μετάθεση από την ουσία στην ύπαρξη. Ο Κυριαζόπουλος αποδιάρθρώνει την μεταφυσική και την θεολογία ακολουθώντας σε πολλά σημεία τις απόψεις του Heidegger για την οντοθεολογία. Το επιχείρημά του είναι ότι ο Θεός δεν μπορεί να θεωρηθεί ως σταθερή ουσία που θα μπορούσε να λειτουργήσει ως το υποκείμενο μιας λογικής κρίσης, η οποία να απαντάει

* Το κείμενο αποτελεί διευρυμένη μορφή της διάλεξης. *The Eleanor H. Boehm Distinguished Lecture* την οποία παρουσίασα στις 25.3.1998 ως η κάτοχος της AMU Women's Chair in Humanistic Studies στο Πανεπιστήμιο Marquette στο Milwaukee/Wisconsin.



στο ερώτημα περί Θεού, επειδή η έννοια του Θεού υπερβαίνει πάντοτε το περιεχόμενό της. Έτσι η μεταφυσική είναι πάντοτε δυνατή και πάντοτε ψευδής. Και ο Κυριαζόπουλος συμπεραίνει ότι μόνον μιά φαινομενολογία της θεμελιώδους αντίφασης μεταξύ της έννοιας και του περιεχομένου της έννοιας μπορεί να ερμηνεύσει την πρωταρχική σχέση της ανθρώπινης ύπαρξης προς τον Θεό ως την σχέση μεταξύ εγώ και σύ.

Ο Παναγιώτης Κανελλόπουλος θέλει να καταδείξει με την μεταφυσική του ότι υπάρχει ένας ανοιχτός δρόμος που υπερβαίνει την σύσταση του κόσμου και οδηγεί στον Θεό. Ο Κανελλόπουλος επικρίνει το έργο του Kant *Προλεγόμενα σέ κάθε μελλοντική μεταφυσική* ως τον πρόλογο ενός βιβλίου, το οποίο ο Kant παρά την υπόσχεσή του δεν κατόρθωσε να γράψει, επειδή ακριβώς ο ίδιος ο Kant με την φιλοσοφία του κατέστρεψε το περιεχόμενο του μελλοντικού βιβλίου του. Έτσι ο Κανελλόπουλος αναλαμβάνει να αποκαταστήσει την μεταφυσική υπό νέους όρους. Ο ίδιος διακρίνει την μεταφυσική αλήθεια από την επιστημονική ακρίβεια και προσδιορίζει την θέση της μεταφυσικής στην περιοχή μεταξύ επιστήμης και θρησκείας. Η μεταφυσική έχει διπλή σημασία κατά τον Κανελλόπουλο. Ως υπαρξιακό εγχείρημα η μεταφυσική είναι το διαρκές οδοιπορικό του ανθρώπου προς τον Θεό, ενώ ως έργο του φιλοσοφικού λόγου η μεταφυσική παραμένει η ημιτελής θεωρία για το νόημα της πραγματικότητας ως ολότητας.

Ο Χρήστος Γιανναράς προβάλλει μιά μετα-νεωτερική μετα-φυσική, η οποία στρέφεται τόσο εναντίον της αντιεμπειρικής θρησκευοποιημένης μεταφυσικής του μεσαίωνα όσο και εναντίον της νεωτερικότητας, η οποία έθεσε στο περιθώριο το κατ' εξοχήν μεταφυσικό ερώτημα, δηλαδή το ερώτημα για το νόημα της ύπαρξης. Ο Γιανναράς προτείνει μιά μεταφυσική της αναφορικότητας, η οποία υπερβαίνει τόσο την γνωσιοκρατική εκδοχή της σχέσης υποκειμένου και αντικειμένου όσο και την ορθολογική έκφραση στην έλλογη ταυτότητα του υποκειμένου. Ο ίδιος αναλύει την αναφορικότητα ως την πραγματική σχέση της υπαρκτής υποκειμενικότητας προς το Άλλο, ως την αδιάσπαστη δυναμική μεταξύ καθαρής επιθυμίας και υπερβατικής κλήσης. Κατά την γνώμη μου αυτή η μεταφυσική μπορεί να θεωρηθεί ως έκφραση «Καππαδοκιανής μετανεωτερικότητας», επειδή ακριβώς περιγράφει το Άλλο με τους όρους της θεολογίας των Καππαδοκιανών Πατέρων της Εκκλησίας, οι οποία είχαν δώσει προτεραιότητα στην σχέση και στις ενέργειες των θείων προσώπων της Αγίας Τριάδος.

Όπως διαπιστώνουμε, οι αναζητήσεις των τριών φιλοσόφων έχουν ως αφετηρία την ριζική διαφοροποίηση από την κλασσική μεταφυσική της ουσίας και εξετάζουν την ανοιχτότητα της ανθρώπινης ύπαρξης ως την



δυνατότητα υπέρβασης του θανάτου. Οι τρεις φιλόσοφοι προσδιορίζουν την ορθολογικότητα κατά τέτοιο τρόπο, ώστε μας επιτρέπουν να συμπεράνουμε ότι στην νεώτερη και στην σύγχρονη Ελλάδα οι αντιλήψεις για τον πολιτισμό και για τον άνθρωπο είναι προσανατολισμένες περισσότερο σε ένα μεγάλο όραμα παρά σε μια μεγάλη θεωρία για τον κόσμο.