



Logos and Science: Hide and Seek in God's Universe

Words and Meanings

How can one find God in the universe? One needs to only think of God, and as Parmenides suggests, God exists. If God would not exist one could not even think of Him. Thinking of God is a way of seeking Him. However, if one seeks God, Augustine writes, that means one had already found Him.

The universe is hiding and revealing God at the same time. Hiding because God is always the totally other, totally transcendent, but revealing also, because God is immanent in His creation as well. This is somewhat similar to what Einstein thought when he wrote that the most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it be comprehensible.

When it comes to the possibility to partially discover God in creation, Christian theology consistently promoted the idea of the created order's intelligibility through which one is led to God. Yet what does it mean to say that the universe is intelligible?

Intelligo means I understand, I read; *Intelligo* and *intellego* come from *inter* (between) and *lego* (collect; recite); something is understandable because it allows itself to be read; it then has a message, it is telling something. Just as between signified and signifier there is an ontological relationship, and that relationship is possible due to the reality and action of

the *signus*, so in the relationship between what is intelligible and the one who reads and understands. The common ground here is the Logos, even if phonetically speaking, the Logos seems to be less present in the word “intelligibility” than the word *sign* in signifier/signified. However I would like to advance the idea that the consonant root of the term “logos,” that is lg, is the real root of the term *lego*, present in intel-*lego* or *intelligo*.

There is an evident link between *logos* and *lego*. In Greek *lego* means I say, I speak (I put together). In Christian theology *Logos* is the Word of God, the saying of God. Through God’s speech, through The Word, things are put together. It is suggested that the term *religion* comes from *re-lego* (the Greek *lego*) which means saying the creed again or taking the sacrament over and over again.¹ That means, it has to do with reading God in creation, understanding that, and saying it, confessing it. That links one to God as well, which is another general meaning of religion.

1. In and Out of Being

Keeping these connections in mind, it would make sense that, as Maximus the Confessor asserts,² the *logoi* in and of creation, which are responsible of keeping it into being, represent the essential base for its understandability by man, made in the image of God, and implicitly in that of the divine Logos through which everything was made.

Yet, all man’s doubts about God and all man’s actions against God and against God’s universe indicate a dramatic schism between him and his creator, with all known and unknown consequences past and future.

Cioran calls that departure from God a desertion from Being, a fall from Being.³ And it is in this sense that Anoushka von Heuer speaks of the soul's reintegration into Being, when she writes that "contemplation repatriates the soul into Being."⁴

That means the soul is out of Being or maybe on the way out as suggested by Cioran's book *The Fall into Time*. Can there be existence out of Being? No and yes. No, because Being implies existence and generates it. Yes, because something of Being continues to remain in what is called existence and even if that is the vital yet weakened link between the two, they are not any more in full communion.

If existence does not participate into Being but runs away from it or falls away from it, it becomes a tragedy.

As Cioran suggests,⁵ there is need for a different type of knowledge to put an end to the annihilating fall into time, into Chronos. One of the aspects of this fall today is busy work. Busy work is superficiality. Superficiality is uprooting, displacement, alienation, death. What is the way out of this tragedy? As A. von Heuer puts it, contemplation.

Contemplation brings back the soul into being,⁶ the part into the whole. And what is contemplation? From an etymological point of view contemplation should have to do with *templum*. *Templum* is a sacred space. *Con* means *with*, it is togetherness. With who? With the one who dwells in the sacred place. Thus, the sacred place is not a simple abstraction. It is the place of the Holy One, the One who sanctifies. Therefore, to contemplate, to be together with the Holy One in His sacred place, in *templum*, means to be in communion

with Him. To participate. Not on an equal footing. It is participation where the one who contemplates knows his position *coram Deo*.

But von Heuer writes that contemplation *repatriates* the soul into Being. That means Being is the home of the soul. That also means the soul in its current existence is no longer home, it is estranged, alienated. Alienation can easily be ground for schizophrenia. Schism. Division. Who are you? Are you the one who used to be? Are you the new one as you are creating yourself? If you are creating yourself isn't that the worst possible illusion ever? In fact, aren't you destroying yourself? Isn't that what Cioran meant when he talked about man in the current condition as being a deserter from Being and a self proclaimed destructor?⁷

The story of the prodigal son seems to be of relevance here. Wanting to reinvent himself in total separation from his father, by denying his home, *patria*, he fell to the lowest depth of despair. Paradoxically, and totally unexpectedly, his schizophrenia helped and saved him. When he left home he became schizophrenic in the sense that he created an inner schism: but in doing that, the other side of the division, the home side, did not disappear completely. It was maybe buried for a while, but not killed effectively. So when the new entity produced by the schism was in trouble, fortunately, the old side was still there.

It was there as a point of reference. Its existence, even if forgotten, was the red line, indicating to the lost son the way back home, the way to repatriation.

Home, *patria*, was still there, even if on the other side of the dividing line. That represented the real self. Since it was there, even if neglected, it offered the chance for the son to come back into himself, to come back home. When he tried to reinvent himself in separation from his *patria*, the son made an existential mistake. It was not his merit that something from the homeplace, from the temple, remained with him, through and beyond the schism, which finally provided the possibility for repatriation.

In other words, the *templum, patria*, goes with you, wherever you go, whether you realize it or not. And when you are in the deepest existential trouble it opens the doors for you. And as you enter the sacred place, you are basically coming into yourself, your real self from which you were estranged, alienated. You are coming into Being.

But *templum*, I suggest, comes from the old Greek *temno-tempo* which means to cut. I see it as meaning to cut the busy work you are taken by. Cut, stop, look, see. If you cut one thing you have the chance to see another one.

Contemplation, therefore, *templum*, means moving from one type of existence to another, from busy work and superficiality to the essential and to the depth, from the profane to the sacred, which is always actually hidden in the profane, as M. Eliade wrote.⁸ So, it's an inner journey. The target is right there, at hand.

2. The Role of the Logos

Where is the Logos, the Divine Word, in this entire scenario?

First, the Logos is the bridge from non-being to being. According to Heraclitus of Ephesus the Logos, a rational ordering cosmic power, is responsible for the universal harmony that keeps everything into being.

Similarly, according to John the Theologian, the Logos is the power through which everything that exists came into being. Take the Logos away and everything goes to death. Plato's divine world of ideas based on which each thing in the physical world exists only due to its idea in the divine world of ideas or of paradigms, is an interesting anticipation, like that of Heraclitus, of John the Evangelist's theology. "In the beginning there was the Logos and the Logos was with God and the Logos was God. Through him everything was made and nothing from what is was not made without Him" (John 1:1-3).

As mentioned earlier, Maximus the Confessor, in the seventh century, elaborated sophisticatedly on the role of the Logos in creation. According to him every single thing in the created universe has a trace of rationality, a trace of the primordial Logos that keeps the thing into existence. The logoi are the principles of what exists, their *raison d'être*⁹.

Logos is the *templum* in the schizophrenic existence of the fallen world. It is the sacred part that gets darkened, buried, but not annihilated, which means there is always a chance. Like one of the prayers of the Orthodox service of the Holy Unction puts it: As many times as you are falling, stand up and you will be saved.

It is because the Logos is the *raison d'être* of each being that in Christian theology it was the Divine Logos that was incarnated for the salvation of the world.

If the Logos was the principle of everything's coming into being, if the Logos is never lost, no matter how deep the fall, like that of the prodigal son, then it is the Logos that, as sacred place, *templum*, home, *patria*, offers the chance for salvation, for homecoming. It is almost syllogistic.

3. Logos and Science

The Logos is the bridge, but not only between the two sides of the schizophrenic division of man. It is the bridge between the spiritual and the physical, between religion and science.

The Logos is the *Ur-wort*, as Hoelderlin wrote, the original word through which everything came into being. That is why Meister Eckhardt wrote that man is an acoustic phenomenon. But not only man. Everything that is, because everything was created through the Word.

Science made a lot of progress in the last few centuries; however it still has to discover the Word, the Logos, the essential principle of Being. Heraclitus of Ephesus saw it prophetically. John the Theologian talked about it based on special revelation. Science today, in many respects, sees it timidly or in controversial contexts and ways. Yet this offers hope for more conversation and contemplation and discovery.

Such hope is interestingly articulated by physicist Frank Tipler in his famous book *The Physics of Immortality*. Tipler is convinced that theology and science are not only compatible with each other, and can work together, but more than that, theology must become a branch of physics as long as physics has effectively invaded the territory of theology.¹⁰

The key concepts of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition are now scientific concepts. From the physics' point of view, theology is nothing but physical cosmology based on the assumption that life as a whole is immortal.¹¹

Indeed the Logos is one of these key concepts in Christian theology. Due to its role in creation, it can be said that it is the house and the home of being in general, and man's dwelling in particular. It is thus *locus theologicus* par excellence because this is where the discourse on God can be found and heard.

As long as science provides a way for us to know things in their external aspects, and religion provides a way to know them in their internal state, it follows that in order to have complete knowledge, one needs both, science and religion. It is in this sense that religion is the metaphysics of science.

As Adrian Lemeni puts it, we assist at “the reconciliation of a science which not long ago was not willing to accept in any way the existence of the supernatural, with a theological vision of the world where the supernatural is organically connected to the natural.”¹² As suggested by the same author, science discovers today the apophatic character of creation.¹³

In this context, the mystical theology of Pseudo-Dionysius in relation to God, keeping in mind the difference of proportions, becomes of important relevance here: we can speak of the physical things whatever we came to know about them, while acknowledging, in an unexpected proof of realism, their ineffable dimension which determines us to approach them doxologically, in awe and humility. This is the only way in which the integrity of creation is recognized, and which offers the most serious foundation for a new attitude that man still needs to adopt towards the created order.

4. Conclusion

Theology and Science are sister fields. One aspect of this relationship is to be seen in the fact that each one is there for man, and not vice-versa; both of them have in view man’s fulfillment and happiness. Each one works with its specific tools and methods, and in its specific conditions, but both towards the same goal. They are both an explanation of how we got here or how the universe was created with different paths towards this end.

Another aspect of their relation consists of the fact that historically, they made good house together. In ancient times and later, they were not afraid of each other and were not at

odds with one another; on the contrary, each provided ground for the other's growth and consolidation. Even today, in some Oriental religions, all sciences are integrated with religion, as S. Ajaya demonstrates.¹⁴

Religion deals with the mystery of creation, yet science is confronted with it as well on many planes. Religion promotes belief while not being against research, and science promotes research while also promoting belief in what it does and in why it does what it does.

They are like sisters who work together and play hide and seek in God's universe, while acknowledging each other and each validating the other. Or at least, this is how they should view themselves.

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- ² Maximus the Confessor, *Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 194-195.
- ³ E. Cioran, *The Fall into Time* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 37.
- ⁴ Anoushka von Heuer, *Le Huitième jour ou La dette d'Adam* (Genève: Jean-Luc de Rougemont Edition, 1980), 38.
- ⁵ E. Cioran, *op. cit.*, 42.
- ⁶ Anoushka von Heuer, *op. cit.*, 38.
- ⁷ E. Cioran, *op. cit.*, 42.
- ⁸ Mircea Iu, *Mircea Eliade* (Bucharest: Ed. Fundatia Romania de Maine, 2006), 27.
- ⁹ Maximus the Confessor, *op. cit.*, 194-195.
- ¹⁰ Frank Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 3.
- ¹¹ *Ibidem*, 17.
- ¹² Adrian Lemeni, "Cosmologia contemporana, interfata in dialogul dintre teologie si stiinta", *Tabor*, An II, Nr. 3 (Iunie 2008), 21.
- ¹³ *Ibidem*.
- ¹⁴ Swami Ajaya, *Psychotherapy East and West: A Unifying Paradigm* (Honesdale, PA: The Himalayan International Institute of Yoga Science and Philosophy of the USA, 1992), 16, 37-38.