

UNIVERSITY OF BABES – BOLYAI, CLUJ-NAPOCA

ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL FACULTY

“ISIDOR TODORAN” DOCTORATE SCHOOL

**THEOLOGY OF CREATION IN THE THOUGHT OF
FATHER DUMITRU STĂNILOAE AND THE CONCEPTIONS OF
THE MODERN COSMOLOGY**

Summary Of The Doctorate Thesis In Theology

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Cluj-Napoca

2011

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Key Words

1. God
2. Jesus Christ
3. Bible, the Holy Scriptures
4. Holy Fathers
5. Holy Tradition
6. Theology
7. Stăniloae
8. Science
9. Cosmology
10. Theonomous
11. Autonomous
12. Creation
13. Creationism
14. Evolutionism
15. World
16. Time
17. Rationalism
18. Man

Foreword

Rev. Dumitru Stăniloae has always been concerned with the study of theology, so that he bequeathed us a vast, rich and deep work. His work is a creative neo-patristic synthesis, in which the dogmas of faith, liturgical life and mystic experience intertwine and emphasise one another. The good understanding of theology as science of salvation and eternal life is an essential element of his theological thought.¹ Today, the theology of Father Dumitru Stăniloae means to rediscover the patristic theology and open to the dialogue between theology and science of the Christian thinker. The theology on the creation of the world of Rev. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae is essential in the present context of the discussions concerning the origin of the world and man.

We see we live a present time impregnated with the persistent systematic effort to describe and understand the Universe we live in.² The work of our great theologian scholar calls the Church to a deep dialogue with the contemporary thought, especially with the scholars. For Rev. Stăniloae, the Church must have today “a theology concerned with emphasising the destiny of humankind and the sense of history which cannot avoid the contact with the world in which people really live their lives. This is why, the Orthodox theology has become – together with the Western one – a theology of the world, and so, coming back to the tradition of the Eastern Fathers who had a vision of the cosmos recapitulated in God. From this point of view, the most important issue of tomorrow’s Orthodox theology will be to reconcile the vision on the cosmos of the Fathers with the one emerged as a result of the natural sciences... Theology must remain open to take in both humankind and cosmos; it must take into account both the aspirations of the entire humankind and the results of modern science and technology”.³

Tackling *The Theology of Creation in Father Dumitru Stăniloae’s Thought and the Conceptions of Modern Cosmology* is a very important task for seeing how the greatest theologian of the 20th century thinks on the basis of the patristic theology concerning the Christian cosmology and how it interacts with today’s scientific thought rooted in the conceptions of modern cosmology. In my doctorate thesis I first presented *the theology of creation in Father Dumitru Stăniloae’s thought and then the conceptions of modern cosmology*.

¹ Cf. His Eminence Daniel, *Metropolitan of Moldova and Bucovina, Theology – Science of Salvation and Eternal Life in Rev. Stăniloae’s Thought*, in *Theology and Life*, issue 7 – 12, Ed. Trinitas.

² Cf. Dr. Adrian Lemeni, Răzvan Ionescu, *Orthodox Theology and Science*, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucharest, 2007, p.7.

³ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Theology and the Church*, pp. 224, 226 (1880), apud. Nesteruk, Alexei, *Universe in Communion – To a Neo-Patristical Synthesis of Theology and Science*, Ed. Curtea Veche, Bucharest, 2000.

To end with, I showed the way in which the patristic theonomous cosmology of Rev. Dumitru Stăniloae opens new perspectives in the present cosmological debates.

Preliminaries

The Preliminaries comprise three sub-chapters: 1. *Biographical data of Father Dumitru Stăniloae*, 2. *Theological personality of Father Dumitru Stăniloae*, 3. *The place of Father Dumitru Stăniloae in the Romanian Theology and the Orthodox Contemporary Theology*. Anybody interested in the theological life of the Orthodox Church in general, or of the Romanian Orthodoxy in particular, cannot avoid the name of Father Stăniloae. More and more theologians from most different parts of the world emphasise the greatness and importance of Father Stăniloae's theology.⁴ In 1981, the well-known Orthodox theologian and writer Olivier Clement said in the French translation of a few of Father Stăniloae's studies on *The Prayer of Jesus and Experience of the Holy Spirit*: "Father Stăniloae is certainly the greatest Orthodox contemporary theologian and, in the course of time, when his work will be translated in the Western languages, it will be clear that this is one of the greatest creations of the Christian thought of the second half of the 20th century."⁵ The first contact with the works of Father Stăniloae, in the chronological order of their appearance reveals a language and thought never included in the tiring scholastic stereotypy, in outdated cultural schemes. On the contrary, his thought is vivid, compelling, nourished by the great theological and philosophical creations of the time, especially in the German and French areas of the Western culture. One glance and, possibly, at least a partial reading of the bibliography making the basis of our theologian shows us his familiarity with the philosophic-cultural language of the time on which he transposed, and transcribed the themes, ideas, Christian theological formulae, especially the Orthodox ones. The studies in the country, and later on abroad, the relations with remarkable personalities of the Orthodox, Catholic or

⁴ Maciej Bielawski, *Rev. Stăniloae, A Philocalic Vision of the World*, transl. by deacon Ioan Ică Jr. Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 1998, p. 9

⁵ Olivier Clément, *Prefazione*, in Dumitru Stăniloae, *La preghiera di Gesù lo Spirito Sancto. Meditazioni teologiche*, Roma, 1988, p. 9, apud *Ibidem*, v. Nicolae Moșoiu, *Taina prezenței lui Dumnezeu în viața umană. Viziunea creatoare a Părintelui Profesor Dumitru Stăniloae*, Ed. paralela 45, Colecția Cartea religioasă, Seria Studii teologice, Cluj-Napoca, motto *Introducere*, p.11; v. also: *Preface Rev. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Prayer of Jesus and experience of the Holy Spirit*, foreword by Archimandrite Gheorghios Grigoriatul, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 1995, p. 11; Idem, *In memoriam, Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993)*, in *Contacts*, no. 164 (1993), p. 293-302; Rev. Prof. Ion Bria, *Hommage au Père Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae pour son 75-e anniversaire*, in *Contacts*, nr. 31 (1979), p. 64-74; Kallistos Ware, *Preface to Dumitru Stăniloae, The experience of God*, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, Massachusetts, 1994; John Meyendorff, *Preface to Dumitru Stăniloae, Theology and the Church*, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York, 1980; Andrew Louth, *The Orthodox Dogmatic Theology of Dumitru Stăniloae*, in *Modern Theology*, vol.13, no. 2, aprilie 1997, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, p. 253-267; Rowan William, *Eastern Orthodox Theology*, in vol. *The Modern Theologians. An Introduction to Christian Theology in the twentieth century*, 2nd edition, edit. Ley David Ford, University of Cambridge, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1997, in spec. p. 511; Jurgen Moltmann, *Preface to Dumitru Stăniloae, Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Cologne/Gutersloh, 1985.

Protestant theology made this particular theological work be known and have a universal Christian value.⁶ This fact is explained through his vision in close relationship with “the entire theological ecumenical Orthodox dogmatic literature, with the inter-confessional one, as well as with the philosophical one, which turns out to be a precious auxiliary for deepening some theological themes in the field of creation, anthropology, and of the relationship of man with the society and the world.”⁷

The first question that the outstanding work of Rev. Stăniloae raises is related to the sources of his thought. These are the following: the Holy Scriptures, works of the Holy Fathers, the liturgical experience lived in the Orthodox Church, his personal sufferance and, especially the charisma of the theologian.

In the theology of Father Stăniloae, his method is analogue, namely the experience of the theologian with his theology is not shifted in relation with the ontological communion between God and the human being, between the uncreated energies and the created world.⁸ His theology is the theology of love and of the personal communion. The theological thought of Rev. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae can be structured in a few matrix ideas, which cover his entire theological activity.⁹ The first idea that sums up and explains his entire theological thought can be showed through only one name or through two words: Jesus Christ, namely the Son of God incarnated for our salvation. The second central idea is the rationality of creation and man as image of God. Another key-idea is that of transparency: transparency of Christ in the Church, in creation and the transparency of the Church for Christ, the transparency of the Church in her Sacraments, transparency of Christ in the Christian and transparency of the Christian for Christ. This transparency is the result of the work of God’s grace in the life of the Church and of the man, and of the uncreated divine energies in the whole world. It is through the Sacraments that Christ is extended in the Church, His body, and in the members of this Body opening one to another and all of them to God and to the world.¹⁰ In Father Stăniloae’s thought, the idea of transparency is conjugated with the idea of responsibility and co-responsibility. These key-ideas detached

⁶ Rev. Dr. Gheorghe Petraru, *Landmarks of the Thought and Work of Rev. Academician Dumitru Stăniloae*, in *Theology and Life*, issue 7-12, Ed. Trinitas, Iași, 2002, p. 46.

⁷ Rev. Prof. Dumitru Radu, *Theological Co-ordinates and Immanency in the Work of Academician Dumitru Stăniloae*, in *Person and Communion*, Honour to Rev. Prof. Academician Dumitru Stăniloae (1903 – 1993), book printed with the blessing of His Eminence Dr. Antonie Plămădeală, Metropolitan of Transylvania, at the initiative and care of Deacon Assistant Ioan ică Jr., Ed. and printing of the Orthodox Archdiocese of Sibiu, 1993, p. 1-3 p, 139.

⁸ Rev. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria, *The „Theological” Method of Rev. Stăniloae*, in *Ortodoxia*, issue 3-4, 2003, Bucharest, p.4.

⁹ Prof. Dr. Dumitru Radu, *Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae at 80 years in S.T.*, no. 9-10, 1983, Bucharest, p. 690.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 693.

from the thought of Rev. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae are all implications and explanations of the central truth: Jesus Christ, the Saviour, in whom the other truths are included and through whom the other truths of our Christian Orthodox faith on God and man's salvation are revealed.¹¹ The philocalic spirituality is another theme on which Rev. Prof. Stăniloae focused, who also offered us its support in the rich theological philocalic literature given in a good Romanian translation, accompanied by rich theological comments, in which the spiritual senses of the truths of faith are emphasised and deepened.

The permanent theological concerns of Rev. Stăniloae are: the Trinitarian and cosmic Christology, conformity of the plan of salvation with the essence of the Holy Scriptures, of the liturgical and philocalic spirituality based on the teaching of the Apostles and of the Holy Fathers. The Holy Fathers of the Church showed in communion of thought with the Saints Apostles that the world itself was created in order to be the environment of manifestation of the Mystery of the incarnation of Christ, by which man and cosmos are given their ultimate meaning: participation in the eternal life and happiness of God.¹²

The theology of Rev. Stăniloae is a doxological theology, of praising and glorifying God and His creative saving work, united at the same time with the thanksgiving expressed for the purpose.¹³

Rev. Dumitru Stăniloae accepts and lives very deeply, in his theological analysis, what the Church teaches and lives; he speaks of theology as a Church member and moreover, as a priest of the Church. He is always certain he expresses the Church and is convincing for his readers from this point of view. He has the courage to successfully propose quite new things in his theology. He deepens the truth, always starting from the major problems of the contemporary world. He speaks of theology using present means of expressions and structures of thought. He speaks of theology composing the impressive poem of love of God. So, his theology stems from the life of Christ, from His liturgical life and is nourished by the theology of the Fathers, is very clearly guided by the Holy Spirit and is articulated always starting from the contemporary issues of man and of the world.¹⁴ This is why Rev. Stăniloae is considered, with good reason, as one of

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 694.

¹² His Eminence Daniel, Metropolitan of Moldova and Bucovina, *op. cit.*, p. 27 – 28.

¹³ Rev. Dr. Ioan Ioniță, *Theology as Experience of the Divine Mystery*, in *Father Dumitru Stăniloae in the Conscience of the contemporaries. Confessions, Evocations, Memoirs*, Ed. Trinitas, Iași, 2003, p. 226.

¹⁴ Prof. Dr. Stylianos Papadopoulos, *The Greatest Orthodox Theologian of the Entire Christianity in the 20th Century*, in *Candela Moldovei*, issue 12, 2005, p. 28.

the most outstanding Christian thinkers of the world, a Father of Orthodoxy in the 20th century, while Rev. John Meyendorff said: “he is the greatest Orthodox theologian of the world”.¹⁵

Part I

Theology of Creation in the Thought of Father Stăniloae

In the first part of the doctorate thesis I tackled the theology of creation in the thought of Father Dumitru Stăniloae structured in two chapters, the former one referring to *the creation of the visible and invisible world* and the latter to *the creation of the world sustained through the divine Providence*.

Chapter I

Creation of the Visible and Invisible World

I. 1 Theology of Creation in the Holy Scripture and at the Holy Fathers

The theology of creation in the thought of Father Dumitru Stăniloae is based both on the Holy Scripture and on the teaching of faith of the Holy Fathers. For Rev. Prof. Stăniloae, the scriptural narration of the Genesis is basic, while its explanation in the theology of the Holy Fathers of the Church is our guide for the Orthodox understanding of the Christian cosmology, focused on the two basic dimensions, Trinitarian and Christological, representing the specific feature of Father Stăniloae’s thought. While trying to express his theological thought on the creation of the world, Father Stăniloae used first of all the patristic texts of Saint Maxim the Confessor, Saint Atanasie the Great, Saint Basil the Great, Dyonisios the Areopagite, etc., showing that the world is a rational work of God. Starting from here, Father Stăniloae underlines the fact that for the Holy Fathers, the created existence is based on the will of God who creates everything, in the course of time, starting from nothing. Rev. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae follows in his theology the method of the Holy Fathers showing that the teaching of the Church must be understood in the spirit of the Fathers.¹⁶

His entire cosmology is firmly based on the apostolic tradition, as the Fathers interpret it, constituting it into a real neo-patristic synthesis of the theology of creation. In this sense, according to Father Stăniloae, the patristic writers are treated as if they were contemporary, living witnesses, whose testimony needs our permanent self-examination and re-thinking, taking

¹⁵ Rev. Ioan Ioniță, *op. cit.* p. 224.

¹⁶ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumtru Stăniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucharest, 1987, vol. I, p. 7.

into account the concerns of the world today.¹⁷ It is the merit of Father Stăniloae to have taken over, developed and deepened the teaching of the Holy Fathers on the creation of the world.¹⁸ Father Dumitru Stăniloae justifies apologetically the Christian teaching on the creation of the world starting from nothing on the basis of the patristic thought. So, he builds his position against any monist or materialist tendencies, which tend to make the world an absolute thing in itself and so, to limit the horizon of existence to the material visible dimension. While interpreting the texts of the Genesis, the most important thing, for Father Stăniloae, is the work of the Holy Fathers, which he comments in order to give an answer to the ardent issues of the theology of creation. When faced with the ancient conceptions on the world, tributary either to dualism or to pantheism, the apologist fathers strove to impose the doctrine of creation starting from nothing, the ontological difference between Creator and creation.¹⁹

For Father Stăniloae, the patristic texts are the pillars of theology in his thought based on the Holy Scriptures.

1.2 Creation of the World in the Century Old Plan of God

While presenting his theological thought concerning the act of creation, Father Stăniloae does not try to be original, but rather deep and simple. When speaking of the first moment of creation, with its origin in the most intimate movement of the will of God (as much as man can realise and understand it), Father Stăniloae looks for the true nature of the entire reality created. God created the world according to the plan He worked out in eternity, which includes the general rationality of the things created, with all their particular genders and species, conceived in a unitary way.²⁰

As Father Stăniloae shows, the world was created and developed through God's running of its component energies, according to His eternal thought, till, through a special work of God, both the biological organism of man and his rational soul were created, as a being made according to the image of the Creator invested with the power of the uncreated grace, through the breadth of God.²¹

¹⁷ Kalistos Ware, Bishop of Dokleia, *Experience of God in the „Dogmatic Theology” of Rev. Dumitru Stăniloae*, in *Ortodoxia*, issue 3-4, 2003, Bucharest, p. 42 – 43.

¹⁸ His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, *Theology and Spirituality*, Ed. Basilica, Bucharest, 2010, p. 90.

¹⁹ Cf. Dr. Adrian Lemeni, *The Eschatological Sense of Creation*, 2nd revised edition, Ed. Asab, Bucharest, 2007, p. 100 – 113.

²⁰ Cf. Rev. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Jesus Christ, Pantocrator*, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucharest, 2005, p. 98.

²¹ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol. I., p. 334.

In the vision of Father Stăniloae, the world got out of God's hands and will go back there, without ever leaving the loving space between these two hands. The reflection on this "beginning" takes Father Stăniloae to another conclusion, which rejects any form of deism, which considers the world created by God, but left alone at the mercy of its own energies and histories. Father Stăniloae develops this argument, when he discusses about the divine energies. The same intuition is involved when he refers to the category of "the time before time" or of "the beginning before beginning", in which God thought all things before, in their final development, in their evolution, in what they would become.

Father Stăniloae also underlines that the act of creation did not take place out of an external or internal need of God, but out of His freedom, love and kindness, according to His eternal plan. He says: "The Fathers emphasised God's kindness as reason of creation, in order to oppose it to the idea that God created the world out of an internal necessity, which leads to pantheism too".²²

According to Rev. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, God created the world in accordance with a plan worked out in the bosom of the Holy Trinity in eternity. This thinking is not a necessity of the divine being, as God thought the world together with time, in eternity, not out of a necessity of His being, but of His will. God wanted to think free in the plan of creation, and decided free to do it as He thought it, when He wanted it. His iconomic emergence, through kenosis, is done according to the work, not to the being. In a synthetic sentence, based on the thought in the patristic key of Father Stăniloae, we can affirm that the world is created out of love by the entire Holy Trinity, according to the plan of God, in eternity.

1.3 The Holy Trinity and the Creation of the World from Nothing in Time

In the theological thought of Rev. Stăniloae, the central place is held by the Trinitarian dogma making all the other teachings of faith depending on it.²³ From this perspective, we can affirm that the theology of Rev. Stăniloae is Trinitarian. For him, the dogma on the Holy Trinity is not a simple formal teaching accepted due to the ecumenical synodality of the Church, but it has a crucial significance for every one of us, affecting the way in which we look at ourselves and at one another. The Holy Trinity is the plenitude of the person in communion²⁴; for Father

²² *Ibidem*, p. 337.

²³ Rev. Lecturer Dr. Ștefan Buchiu, *Cosmology in the Work of Rev. Stăniloae and Its Ecological Implications*, in *Ortodoxia*, issue 3-4, 2003, Bucharest, p. 34.

²⁴ Kallistos Ware, *op.cit.*, p. 54.

Stăniloae, the Holy Trinity is the creator, saviour and eternal aim of all faithful.²⁵ In this sense, for our great theologian, the Holy Trinity is the perfect, creative and providential existence of the world and man, as a saviour of ours, of all people, and as an eternal aim of all people, with all these included in an image of high theological and spiritual elevation imposed as necessity to the genuine Christian faith and experience.²⁶ God is perfect existence, because He is both One and Three, at the same time.²⁷ Father Stăniloae says: “The Infinity of perfect existence and the infinity of a father who dedicates Himself for ever and ever to a Son with His joy to dedicate Himself, and of the Son to receive Him; as well as with the communion of the joy (as existence) of a Third, able to know, through his own equal experience, all the generosity of the Father accompanied by joy and all its reception accompanied by joy, by the Son”²⁸ The life of communion of the Trinitarian Persons is a life in love and fruitfulness. The love between the Persons would be completely closed had it not be for the creation, or a God completely closed is completely transcendent, unknown, not loving; so, in the process of bringing the entire creation from non existence to existence, the very relation of inter-Trinitarian communion and the love of the Holy Trinity is reflected. The Holy Trinity understood as the mystery of the supreme love explains the bringing to existence of the world and man out of nothing. Father Stăniloae shows that “in the structure of the supreme inter-personal love of the Trinity is given not only the unique possibility of creating another form of existence in favour of some other persons conscious, free and loving, but also the unique possibility to save these persons when they make wrong use of freedom and get out of the relationship of plenary existence and diminish and change their existence in a tormenting way”.²⁹

Father Stăniloae presents 5 arguments of the creation out of nothing: ontological, gnosiological, theological, anthropological and that of the movement as effect of the first cause.

The Holy Trinity is the our Creator and Saviour, according to the theological thought of Rev. Dumitru Stăniloae, while the creation is brought to existence as a harmonious unity by the Holy Trinity. This is why if the world and man had a beginning, it would not be out of nothing, and so, it would not be the exclusive result of God’s freedom and love. From this perspective, the

²⁵ In *Ortodoxia*, issue 2, p. 14-42.

²⁶ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Radu, *An Updated Climax of the Patristic Theology*, in *Ortodoxia*, 1993, issue 3.4, p. 49.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *The Holy Trinity, Creator and Saviour and Eternal Aim of All Faithful*, in *Ortodoxia*, issue 2, 1998, p. 14-42.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 23-24.

world is created and it has a beginning, with its sense accomplished in man. Starting from these findings, one can affirm that the Trinitarian God creates the world out of nothing, in time and in love.

I. 4 The Reason and Purpose of Creation

Father Stăniloae affirms in the *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* that: “according to the Christian faith, the world and man have a beginning and will have an end too.”³⁰ According to Father Dumitru Stăniloae, the world must be seen between its beginning and its end, and this is why one cannot speak about a beginning without end; he sees everything in synthesis and this is one of the characteristic features of his thought.³¹ In this sense, he unites the beginning and end when he refers to the reason and purpose of creation.

The reason and purpose of creation are united in God. Father Stăniloae shows the strict relation between God and the world. The same as he cannot conceive the beginning of the world without its end, so he cannot see the world without its relation with God, who is the One who guarantees the unity between the reason and purpose of creation. According to him, creation did not emerge from an external or internal necessity of God, but from His freedom, love and kindness.³²

The love between the three Divine Persons is the only explanation of the creation of another existence, but that of proper to them, plenary and uncreated from eternity. God would not be a Creator if He were not good, would not be if He were not a Person, in conscious relationship with other persons, from eternity. He would not be creator if He were not in Trinity, and the world would not be created without a good, conscious and free God.³³

Father Stăniloae affirms that: “God created the world for a reason and with a purpose”.³⁴ God creates the world not out of necessity, but out of His kindness; this is why He created it to make it share His eternity or communion, not through its being, but through grace, through its sharing. The Holy Trinity created the world not out of necessity, not out of obligation, but out of kindness. In this sense, the world must be understood as a gift, so that this assertion shows us the

³⁰ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Dogmatic Theology...*, vol. I, p. 226.

³¹ Maciej Bielawski, *Father Săniloae, a philocalic vision on the world*, p. 155.

³² Catechistic Speech, PG 45, col. 21, apud Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Dogmatic Theology...*, vol. I, p.232.

³³ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *The Holy Trinity and the Creation of the World out of Nothing in Time*, in *Mitropolia Olteniei*, issue 3, 1987, p. 41.

³⁴ *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol. II, p. 232.

reason for creating the Universe. The creation of the world out of God's kindness is designed to make other beings share His love.

I.5 The World as a Gift of the Love of the Holy Trinity

According to Rev. Stăniloae, the world is a gift of the love of the Holy Trinity to man. This characteristic feature of the world as a gift of the Holy Trinity defines the relation between the world and man. Therefore, basic in the theological thought of Father Stăniloae is the fact that the world was created by God as a gift for man: "According to the Christian faith, the world was created by God as a gift for the humans".³⁵

According to Father Stăniloae, the world is the gift of God for us, the humans, by virtue of achieving a "progressive dialogue in love with us. But to do that, we must also return a gift to God. But man does not own anything that can be given to God. God is glad when man renounces to some of the gifts received, giving them back (...) So, he shows that he confirms the fact that everything he has comes from God as a gift and that they belong to Him. The world as a gift of God shows that it is not the ultimate absolute reality."³⁶

When he refers to the creation of the world as a gift of God, Father Stăniloae says that: "God shows us His love through the world as a gift in order to achieve a progressive dialogue in His love for us".³⁷ So, the world is the gift that God gives to man, a gift of the love of the Holy Trinity, to which man is called to answer with love. Father Stăniloae shows that the world, having the divine love as reason for creation, is a gift of God for the humans.

I.6 The world – the Rational Work of God The Reasons of the Things and Their Relationship with God, the Creator Logos

One chapter of Orthodox dogmatic and spirituality in which the creative contribution of Father Stăniloae is felt, is the one concerning the rationality of the world.³⁸ In this sense he insists on the fact that the rationality of the world is for man's sake with its climax in man. Because man's progress in knowing the meaning of things stimulates progress in the communion with God and other people, man's responsibility is to discover new senses or meanings in things.³⁹

³⁵ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol. I, p. 234.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Rationality of creation and its implications*, in *Ortodoxia*, issue 3-4 1993, p. 31 - 35

³⁹ Emil Bartoș, *Concept of deification in the theology of Dumitru Stăniloae*, Ed. „Emanuel” Bible Institute of Oradea, 1999, p. 186 – 187.

The rationality of creation enables man to discover the reasons of things for his material benefit and for the spiritual sense of his life and existence. Father Stăniloae identifies, in accordance with the patristic writings, a double rationality: a material or biological one, and a physic and spiritual one. The natural rationality is the first step we climb to the higher and higher senses of those who exist. The Romanian theologian defines the world as “a unitary reasonable reality, existing for the inter-human dialogue, as a prerequisite for man’s spiritual growth, for the development of humankind”.⁴⁰

Rev. Prof. Stăniloae explained and developed, from the point of view of the rationality of creation, the basic teachings of the Holy Fathers, among whom Dyonisios the Areopagite, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Maxim the Confessor and Saint Gregory Palama, while this contribution starts from the elements of terminology and develops in rich tinges and details.⁴¹ Yet, from a theological point of view, Father Stăniloae has the great merit to have taken over the patristic legacy and emphasised both the value of human reason and the inner rationality of creation, as well as the relationship between them, both of them expressions of the natural relation, which starts from man and creation to God, different from the supernatural revelation, which starts from God to man, with its full expression in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Incarnated Son of God.⁴²

Another remarkable contribution of our great theologian consists in underlining the inner relationship between the natural and the supernatural revelations.⁴³ Through the affirmation of the inner rationality of the creation, Rev. Stăniloae drastically opposes the process of the secularisation of the world⁴⁴, affirming with great vigour the presence of God in creation and eternal destination of man through the communion with God. The world was brought to existence as “a harmonious whole, sustained by a unitary rationality, which unites the reasons of all the component parts in it”.⁴⁵

The rationality of creation indicates too, just like the rationality of things, or like their spiritual structure, a general way of reflecting the image of God in cosmos. This constitutive element of the cosmology of Father Stăniloae emphasises the inner relation, of maxim intensity, which relates to God-the Holy Trinity, to the world, as distinct image. The relationship of all

⁴⁰ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Rationality of Creation and Its Implications*, p. 237.

⁴¹ Cf. Lecturer Dr. Ioan Teșu, *The World, Prayer and Asceticism in the Theology of Rev. Stăniloae*, ed. Trinitas, Iași, 2003, p. 42.

⁴² Rev. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol. II, p. 10.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 27, 31

⁴⁴ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁴⁵ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *The Immortal Image of God*, Ed. Mitropolitan See of Oltenia, Craiova, 1987, p. 258.

components of Cosmos, as well as of the Cosmos as a whole justifies once more the theonomy of creation, the fact that the world has its centre of support in God.⁴⁶ According to Rev. Stăniloae, the world as nature turns out to be a rational unitary reality, which exists for inter-human dialogue. In this sense, the rationality of creation enables man to discover the reasons of things for his material and spiritual existence.

*I.7 Creation of man according to His image and Likeness
God and His Special Relation with Man and the World Created*

The teaching on man holds an important place in the theological work of Father Stăniloae, having been situated just after the teaching of faith on the Holy Trinity and the Christological one. The new character of the anthropological perspective is given first of all on its permanent relationship both with the dogma of the Holy Trinity and with the Christological one. Father Stăniloae cannot speak about Christ without referring to man; he cannot deepen the dogma of the Holy Trinity without revealing the value of the human person. The Orthodox anthropology of Father Stăniloae comes into prominence through its Trinitarian and Christological basis, to which the pneumatological one is added most times.⁴⁷ The anthropology of Father Stăniloae is a restoration in and through the Son of God made Man.

The anthropological model of Father Dumitru Stăniloae emphasises the idea that man is made up of body and soul.⁴⁸ Man exceeds the material order due to his soul, which cannot be reduced to matter.⁴⁹

The relationship between man and cosmos is exceptionally underlined by Father Stăniloae who explains the material and spiritual span of the entire creation, whose sense and final purpose are included in the plan of the will of the Holy Trinity, belonging to the uncreated transcendent.

According to the theological thought of Father Dumitru Stăniloae, man is created dichotomously by God, made up of body and soul, and this dichotomy finds its unity in the image of God, which embraces both body and soul. In this capacity of image of God, man was created to live in communion with God and the entire creation. In this sense, the mystery of man is the mystery of the person because he was created according to the image of God. In this sense,

⁴⁶ Rev. Prof. Dr. Ștefan Buchiu, *Cosmology in the Work of Rev. Stăniloae and Its Ecological Implications*, p. 68.

⁴⁷ Idem, *Apofatic Knowledge in the Thought of Rev. Dumitru Stăniloae*, Ed. Libra, Bucharest, 2002, p. 117.

⁴⁸ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol. I, p. 257.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 258.

the mystery of man is the mystery of the person because he was created according to the image of God. Man relates the world to God through his dichotomous constitution, and is called to progress together with the creation to the new transfigured heaven and earth, of the Kingdom of God.

*1.8 Creation of the Invisible World of the Angels
and Their Role in Sustaining the Spiritual Progress
of the Good in the World*

In his dogmatic theology, Father Stăniloae speaks about the creation of the invisible world of the angels and of their role in the spiritual progress of the human nature.⁵⁰ Father Stăniloae shows the solidarity of the angelic and human world,⁵¹ affirming the fact that God, unlimited in richness, does not create with avarice.⁵² If God had created only incarnated spirits, we would have thought that the Supreme Being could be known only through sensitive forms. That would mean that the Being itself is somehow a sensitive subject, that matter is ontologically related to the existence of the absolute. And this would constitute a doubt on creation itself. A matter related to the absolute Being would take its capacity of creation, giving it a pantheist character.⁵³

As for the origin of the angels, the divine Revelation, says Father Stăniloae, speaks about a world of the spirits not incarnated, in solidarity with the humans and with the sensitive world. The Fathers think that the angels were created before the creation of the sensitive world and of the man.⁵⁴ Because the angels have the mission to help the humans to understand the eternal reality of God since the beginning of their existence, they must exist when man appears and so must the sensitive world man is related to.⁵⁵

The superiority of the angels and the special mission of the humans is another sub-chapter Father Stăniloae treated, in which he affirms that the superiority of the angels from a certain point of view is not contradicted by their mission of servants of the man in view of salvation.⁵⁶

In order to see how the angels know God, Father Stăniloae starts from the way in which the humans come to know God.⁵⁷ Father Stăniloae affirms that, through the divine grace, the

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 287 – 308.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 286 – 292.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 287.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 288.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 289.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 292 – 295.

angels can know somehow even the material aspects of things. Certainly, the way of knowing all this is impossible to be fully understood.⁵⁸

According to Father Dumitru Stăniloae, God creates angels out of His unlimited richness of kindness and love, guided by the divine Revelation in the Holy Scriptures and Holy Tradition. Angels are spiritual beings, go-between the absolute spirituality of God and the sensitive corporality of the humans, who remained firm in the good through the power of the uncreated grace.⁵⁹ All the created existence of the angels and humans is unfolded around Christ, Who recapitulates everything in Him.

1.9 The Fall of the Bad Angels

and Their Role in the Fall of Man and Sustaining the Evil in the World

Based on the patristic thought, when referring to the fall of the bad angels and to their role in the fall of man and sustaining the evil in the world, Father Stăniloae shows that the bad angels moved from their natural good state, in which God created them, by their own accord, to a state contrary to their nature and raised against God and so they became bad and fell from the glory where God had put them. The bad angels are against both God and the man created according to His image. Their purpose, after the fall from the heavenly glory and creation of the visible world, is to urge man to infringe all the divine laws and to introduce disorder in creation and undermine it. Man fell in the temptation of the devil and lost the Paradise.⁶⁰ The tree of knowing good and evil was the means by which the devil attracted man to evil under appearance of good. Adam's sin consists in the fact that he wanted "to become God", without God, out of pride, by his own free will. In spite of the sin of the fore-parents Adam and Eve, God keeps aspiration in creation, through the release from death and decay, because creation is not autonomous, but it has theonomous constitution. Through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, our Lord, His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension, the Image of God was restored in man because God had mercy on us, saving us through His Son.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 295 – 296.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 296 – 305.

⁵⁹ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Jesus Christ Pantocrator*, p. 148 – 149.

⁶⁰ Rev. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Theology*, vol. I, p. 459.

Chapter II

Creation of the World Sustained by the Divine Providence

II.1 The Three Aspects of the Divine Providence

According to Father Staniloae, the providential work of God is the care both for man and for the world He created.⁶¹ The Orthodox theology identifies three aspects of the divine Providence. In this sense, we see, on the basis of the theological thought of Father Staniloae, that the three aspects of the Divine Providence show us the work of God, first of all for the conservation of creation by keeping the identity of the entire visible creation unchanged, by virtue of the fact that this is the result of His work. Secondly, the Divine Providence represents the co-working of God with the entire universe and with each of its parts in order to reach its purpose. The third aspect of the Divine Providence takes the world to its final purpose, *the new heaven and earth* of the Kingdom of God.⁶²

II.2 Jesus Christ Pantocrator

Jesus Christ Pantocrator makes the centre of Father Staniloae's theology.⁶³ His dogmatic work is the expression of this patristic synthesis in the Orthodox thought and excels through the capital importance it confers to the personal presence and work of the Saviour in the life of the Church and of the creation in the light of the apostolic Tradition and of the Holy Scriptures, of the patristic Tradition and of the Byzantine Liturgy.⁶⁴

In Father Staniloae's vision - on Bible, patristic and liturgical basis - Christ is first of all God and Man undivided. Secondly, Christ is the centre of history, in whom the centuries meet, through whom God gets down to man and of the centuries through which man raises to God. Thirdly, Christ is "the beginning, middle and end of the centuries". As beginning of the centuries, Christ is the Creative Logos by whom the world and man were created. As middle of the centuries, He is the Saving Logos, who restored man and creation in Him. As end of the centuries, He is the Creative and Saving Logos in whom man and creation find their plenary glorification, at His Second Coming, after the Resurrection of the dead and after the universal

⁶¹ Idem, in *Introduction to Ambigua of Saint Maxim the Confessor*, p. 34.

⁶² Rev. Prof. Isidor Todoran, Archdeacon, Rev. Prof. Ioan Zăgorean, *Orthodox Dogmatic...* p. 181.

⁶³ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Essence of the dogmatic synthesis of Rev. Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae* in *S.T.*, no. 7-8, 1983, p. 583.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 586.

judgement. Having been One of the Trinity who was incarnated for our salvation, Christ is the link between cosmos, Church and Trinity.⁶⁵

The entire theology of Rev. Staniloae excels through the capital importance it confers to the personal work of the Saviour in the life of the Church and of the creation.⁶⁶ The personal presence and work of Jesus Christ, our Lord, in the life of the Church and of creation are elements which show us the importance and value of Jesus Christ as Pantocrator. For us, Christ is the aim of our final perfection, as no man can achieve, as well as the way that leads to this aim because He is both God and Man. The Person of the Saviour is present in the history of the humans' salvation from the beginning till the end. According to Rev. Staniloae, the Orthodox Christology based on the Ecumenical Synod of Chalcedon of 451 is one of the communion.⁶⁷ In this sense, His divinity shows that for us, the Christians, Christ is not only a founder of religion, but also a Saviour, because His redemptive work is identified with His Person, as true God and true man.

II.3 Restoration of Man and of Creation in Jesus Christ, the Creator and Saviour Logos

As we have already shown above, the Person of Christ is central in Father Staniloae's theology, and the hypostatic union of the two natures, human and divine, holds an important place in his theological thought. The unity of the person of Jesus Christ in the two natures has a series of consequences or implications, which show more clearly its saving results in relation with the human nature of the Incarnated Word, as well as in relation with us, the humans.

Father Staniloae emphasises the role of the Son in the salvation work, which starts with the Incarnation, continues with His death and Resurrection from the dead and culminates with His Ascension to heaven and His stay on the right hand of the Father on the throne of the heavenly glory, by which Christ works not only on the humans, but also on Himself, because He deified His human nature through His redemptive work. Christ does not save us through a work separate from His person, but through a saving work in which His Person is present.⁶⁸

The entire messianic activity of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, represents the work for saving the human race. Father Staniloae affirms that "The Christian Dogmatic embraces the saving and

⁶⁵ Rev. Prof. Dumitru Popescu, *Centrality of Christ*, in „*Glasul Bisericii*”, Bucharest, 2002, p. 75.

⁶⁶ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Staniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol. II, p. 73.

⁶⁷ Idem, *The Immortal Image of God*, p. 91.

⁶⁸ Idem, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol. II, p. 111.

life giving work of the divine Person of Jesus Christ made man”,⁶⁹ on the basis of the Holy Scripture and of the patristic theology.

When speaking of Christ and His saving work, Father Dumitru Staniloae deepens the notion of person in general and especially the super-existent reality of the divine person of Jesus Christ, as well as its soteriological implications which he constantly follows in all his works, emphasising, every time, new significances and nuances. In all His work, Christ manifests His threefold relation with His human nature, with the Father and with the humans and in all of them He manifests His service of Teacher-Prophet, of High Priest and of King. The three dignities of the Saviour and so, the three directions of the redemptive work: to God-the-Father, to His own human nature, received at incarnation and to all humans included in Him through the human nature assumed, namely the recapitulative aspect, find their explanation and working power of our salvation in the Person of God-the-Man, Jesus Christ.⁷⁰

According to Father Staniloae, for us, the Orthodox Christians, the crucial revealing event in the history of salvation is the Incarnation of the Son of God, Incarnation that renews the creation. Jesus Christ is named Saviour because the redemptive work is not separated from the Person of the Incarnated Word. Due to the indissoluble link between the redemptive work and the Person of Jesus Christ, the Saviour, the entire Holy Trinity is present and works for our salvation.⁷¹ Jesus Christ, the new Adam, brightens the mystery of the creation of the first Adam, because Christ is the restoration and perfection of man.

Part II

Modern Cosmological Conceptions

I dedicated the second part of my doctorate thesis to the presentation and estimation of the various modern cosmological conceptions and to the impact they have over the contemporary science and theology. The structure of this part is made up of two chapters, the former one presents *a historical look over the autonomous cosmology from the early beginning till today* (chapter III), and the latter presents *the evolutionist cosmologies from an Orthodox point of view* (chapter IV).

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, p.73.

⁷⁰ Rev. Prof. Dumitru Radu, *An Updated Climax of the Patristic Theology*, in *Ortodoxia*, issue 3-4, 1993, Bucharest, p. 40.

⁷¹ Rev. Prof. Dumitru Popescu, *Jesus Christ Pantocrator*, p. 224.

Chapter III

Historical Review over the Autonomous Cosmology since the Early Beginning till Today

III.1 Cosmological Conception in Antiquity

The autonomous vision over the world is rooted in the Greek antique philosophy, which passed through various transformations for over 700 years, till the 4th century A.D. I presented these conceptions in the subchapter dedicated to the *Cosmological conceptions in antiquity* beginning with Heraclit's atomism and continuing with Platon, Aristotle, Plotin, Pitagora, Epicur and Neoplatonics (and others). The antique world knew the concept of creation in the true sense of the word. The absolute divinity or certain gods were seen only as demiurges who worked out a pre-existent matter. Other times, the world was seen as an emanation from the divine being. The pantheism of the antique thought changed man into a wheel in a huge mechanism that crushed merciless any aspiration to freedom.⁷²

It was with these cosmological conceptions of the antiquity that the Holy Fathers of the 4th century were faced with when they formulated the Christian teaching on the creation of the world by the Trinitarian God, out of nothing in the course of time. This is why it is essential to know the cosmological conceptions from antiquity in order to understand how the Holy Fathers succeeded in giving a basic answer concerning the creation of the world, for us, those living today. This one must be a model for today's theology in its dialogue with science. One of the theologians who understood the patristic basis as a model in the dialogue between theology and science is Father Dumitru Staniloae. This is why the Orthodox Theology based on patristics and so conclusively presented in the 20th century by Father Dumitru Staniloae on the creation of the world is the lighthouse for understanding the creation of the world out of nothing in the course of time by God.

III.2 Cosmological Conceptions in the Middle Ages

The cosmology of the Middle Ages makes the passage from the antique cosmology to the modern scientific one. We cannot understand the mutations produced in cosmology, passing from the pantheism of the antiquity to an extreme variant (deism) in the Middle Ages and modernity, without taking into account the historical context which influenced the patterns of thought of the respective time. In the West, the cosmology of this time was based rather on Aristotle's philosophy and on Blessed Augustin's thought, both of them making a clear cut

⁷² Rev. D. Popescu, *Theology and Culture*, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucharest, 1993, p. 76.

between the sensitive world and the intelligible one, breaking in this way the unity of the Eastern cosmology which saw compatibility between nature and grace.

A contribution to an articulated answer of the Church to the cosmological concern of the Middle Ages from the point of view of the Christian theology is the thought of Father Dumitru Staniloae on the creation of the world which consists in underlining the inner relationship between the natural Revelation and the supernatural one and through the affirmation of the inner rationality of creation.⁷³

III.3 Change of the Ptolemaic Geocentric Vision on the World in the Cosmology of the Renaissance and of the Modern Time

For one thousand years, both theology and science have been dominated by the Ptolemaic vision on the world. The Renaissance epoch brings, in the cosmological plan, a new change in regard to the Ptolemaic geocentric vision on the world and to the passage to the heliocentric system. The astronomers whose scientific heliocentric research can be pointed out for changing the geocentric vision on the world are: Kepler, Copernicus, Bruno, Galilee, as well as Newton through the theory of gravitation and of the interaction between things. When examining the antique history and philosophy, we learn that Ptolemy is the last and most famous of the great astronomers of antiquity. Nothing is known about his life than he unfolded his activity in Alexandria from 127 – 151 A.D.⁷⁴ His most important work, *Mathematike Syntaxis*, known in general as *Almagest*, a name given by the Arab scholars, is a complete presentation of the geocentric system. This Ptolemaic vision on the world made the scientific basis the Holy Fathers had at hand in the first Christian century when they dealt with the theology of creation, and accepted philosophy as method of work.⁷⁵ As regards the Orthodox attitude towards the changing of the Ptolemaic vision at the time of the Renaissance, we can affirm that in its confessions of faith of the 16th – 17th centuries, the Orthodox theology limited to affirm, on the basis of its teaching of faith, that God is the creator of all things visible and invisible.⁷⁶

⁷³ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Rationality of Creation and Its Implications*, p. 34

⁷⁴ Encyclopaedia of the Greek Civilisation, Ed. Meridian, Bucharest, 1970, p. 461

⁷⁵ See S. Basil the Great, *Himilies at Hexaemeron*, in P.S.B., vol. 17, Writings, Part I, St. Maxim the Confessor, *Ambigua*, in P.S.B., bol. 80, Writings, part I, translation and introduction Rev. Prof. Dumitru Staniloae

⁷⁶ The following things are affirmed about creation in Mitrofan Kritopulos' confession of faith: "The Eastern Church has the following teaching about the creation of the entire world: Having been very kind, God, one in Trinity, wanted to produce rational beings to whom to share His grace, but not because He needed that, because He does not lack anything and is Self sufficient. So, first of all He conceived (thought) the heavenly powers and this thought became a deed right away (...). Afterwards he produced matter out of nothing, which he changed into a form and created this sensitive visible world..." Cf. *Confession of Faith of Mitrofan Kritopoulos*, translation by Deacon Lecturer Ioan I. Ica, in *Mitropolia Ardealului*, year XVIII, issue 3-4, 1973, p. 428. The Confession of Faith of Metropolitan Petru Movila says when answering the question XVIII ("Because we read the word

III.4 The Beginning of Teaching the Modern Cosmology

in the Patriarchal Schools and Princely Academies in Wallachia and Moldova

For the Romanian space, the basic elements for the educational and cultural formation were the princely Academies in Wallachia and Moldova. Beginning with the 14th century, at the same time with the formation of the Romanian feudal states, the first schools appear, which would be the most important centres of scholarly activity, the best environment for developing the culture of the time.⁷⁷

It was in the princely Academies that the first discussions on the cosmologic problematic of the Renaissance and modern epoch appeared, also related to the new scientific discoveries. If the science of the Middle Ages is abstract and autonomous, the Eastern Orthodox theology continues to manifest its patristic theonomy ensuring a scientific balance in the Eastern space provided especially by the patriarchal schools, and by the princely Academies in the Romanian Countries. The last ones are our first schools appeared, organised near monasteries, dioceses and metropolitan sees. Besides the exact sciences and philosophy, theology and the Greek language were also taught in these schools.

A telling episode for understanding the concerns related to the dialogue between theology and science within these princely Academies is the case of professor Iosif Mesiodax. In this sense, his work *Apologia* proves the astronomic and cosmologic concerns in the Romanian Countries in the patriarchal schools and princely Academies. The moment Iosif Mesiodax is representative for the beginning of teaching modern cosmology in the educational system in the South East of Europe and Romanian Countries, in which all resistance puts up, at the same time, with the Orthodox theonom cosmology.⁷⁸

III.5 Cosmology in the Enlightenment Epoch in the Hellenic Space

Cosmology in the Illuminist epoch in the Eastern world was marked by the *lights* thinking in Western Europe causing polemics especially in the Hellenic space, between theology and science, a fact bringing about the West's drifting from the East.⁷⁹ The scholastic influences,

'maker' in this article: is God the maker of all things?) that "God is the maker of all things visible and invisible". Cf. Metropolitan Petru Movila, Cf. Metropolitan Petru Movila, *Orthodox Confession of Faith of the Eastern Catholic and Apostolic Church*, translated by Alexandru Elian, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucharest, 1981, apud Synod of Iasi and St. Petru Movila 1642 -2002, homage book edited at the annoversary of 360 years since the Synod of Iasi, Ed. Trinitas, Iasi, 2002, p. VIII

⁷⁷ *History of Education in Romania*, vol. I, Editor in charge, Acad. Stefam Pascu, Bucharest, 1983, p. 76.

⁷⁸ *Apologia*, translated by Olimp Caciula, Ed. Didactic and Pedagogic, Bucharest 1977, p. 107.

⁷⁹ Cf. G. Metalinos, *The Dynamic of Illuminism in the activity of the colivari* Ed. Akritas, Athens, 1988, p. 174, see also Christos Yannaris, *Orthodoxy and Occident in Modern Greece*, 2nd Edition, Athens, 1999, p. 156.

nominalistic, come up, as well as the idea of scientific revolution based on a platonic gnosiology. In the East, gnosiology is determined by the *object* known, which has a double nature: uncreated and created. Uncreated is only God, the Trinitarian One, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, whose Trinitarian nature is not defined metaphysically, but known only empirically.⁸⁰ Created is the universe (or *universes*) in which our existence is objectified. Faith represents the knowledge of the uncreated, while knowledge means knowing the created. Therefore, there are two different types of knowledge, each of them with its method and instruments.⁸¹ In Orthodoxy, gnosiology is supernatural, super-rational, emphasised most clearly through hesychasm where the truths and sense of Orthodoxy are delineated with their empirical, spiritual, verification without diminishing the experimental knowledge of the phenomenon.⁸² The Greek Illuminists, with their patriarch Adamantios Korais, were metaphysicians in theology and introduced in Greece the confrontation between science and metaphysics.⁸³ But the Orthodox hesychasts of the Holy Mount, the Colivars, remained at their method of theological knowledge, by living it, just like Macarios Notaras, Saint Nicodim the Aghiorite, Atanasie Parios, Cosma the Etolian, and others, for whom Orthodoxy is not an ideology, but a way of living. The great tension in the Hellenic space between the patristic traditionalism of the colivars from Mount Athos and the Enlightenment of the Greek academies of the time finds its apologetic basis against the illuminist autonomous conceptions in the re-discovering of the ascetic writings of the philocalic fathers. In this sense, we can affirm that Philocalia saved the patristic spirit of Orthodoxy faced with Enlightenment in the Hellenic space. The same thing happened in the 20th century when the translation of the Philocalia into Romanian and the footnotes of Father Staniloae made the support of the spiritual survival faced with the atheist materialist communism. When referring to the future theology of the cosmos rooted in the trend of the patristic-philocalic tradition of the Orthodoxy, Father Staniloae said: “So, the Orthodox Theology became – together with the Western theology – a theology of the world, going back, through this aspect, to the tradition of the Eastern Fathers who had the vision of the cosmos recapitulated in God. From this point of view, the most important problem for tomorrow’s Orthodox theology will be to reconcile the cosmic vision of the Fathers with a vision, which grows starting from the results of the science of

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 175-176.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 178.

⁸² Cf. Ierotheos Vlahos, Metropolitan of Navpakos – *Short Introduction in the Orthodox Pneumatology*, Athens, 1992, p.156

⁸³ Cf. Panaiotis Kondylis, *Criticism of Metaphysics in the Modern Thought. From the late Middle Ages till the End of Enlightenment*, Athens, 1983, p. 169.

nature. (...) Tomorrow's theology must be opened to the entire historical and cosmic reality, but also spiritual".⁸⁴

III.6 Cosmology in the Modern Epoch

The Galileo Galilee episode in the history of cosmology marks the end of the cosmological vision of the Middle Ages and beginning of the Modern Epoch. The majority of the researchers consider Galileo Galilee the beginning of modernity in science and philosophy. The Galilee moment illustrates eloquently the destruction of the mythocosmos. We have not only a change of scientific perspective, but also a change of theological cultural vision on the world.⁸⁵ In the modern epoch, Galileo, Newton and others exclude the contemplative element from cosmology, the scientific theology is technically imprinted through the empirical pragmatism, the personal spiritual world is replaced with that of energy, of the impersonal force. Orthodoxy recognised God as the Creator of the world and did not make a strict rationalist case of the adoption of the heliocentric theory instead of the geocentric one. For the East, Cosmos has a teophanic function. Taking into account the great scientific discoveries, the strict mechanistic vision of the world was a break in the promotion of the Eastern cosmology, which sees God as Pantocrator.⁸⁶

We can affirm that the theonomous theology of Father Dumitru Staniloae helps contemporary man to understand the scientific truths discovered 300 years ago in the plan of metaphysic understanding too, or more exactly in the plan of the spiritual understanding of the world and of the meaning of its existence in its relation with the Creator Who is God One in Being and Trinitarian in Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. From a theological point of view, it is the merit of Rev. Prof. Dumitru Staniloae to have taken over the patristic heritage and emphasised both the value of human reason and the inner rationality of creation, as well as the relationship between them, both as expressions of the natural relationship, which starts from man and creation to God,⁸⁷ as an answer to the autonomous cosmologic conceptions of the modern epoch.

⁸⁴ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Theology and the Church*, New York, 1980, p. 224-226, in *Tache actuelle de la theologie*, Service Ortodoxe de Presse, 70 (1982), p. 17-20, apud Maciej Bielawski, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

⁸⁵ Dr. Adrian Lemeni, *The Eschatologic Sense of Creation*, p. 66.

⁸⁶ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Creation of the World in the Light of the Holy Scripture and of the Contemporary Science*, in *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei* of 15 February 2000, p. 3; Cf. *Introduction in the Orthodox Dogmatic*, Ed. Libra Bucharest, 1997, p. 91-98

⁸⁷ Idem, *Rationality of Creation and Its Implications*, p. 33.

Chapter IV

Evolutionist cosmologies from an Orthodox point of view

IV.1 Darwinism and the dialectic atheism

The evolutionist cosmologies stem from the Darwinism promoted by Charles Darwin in his work *The Origin of Species* in which he presents the theory that the species have naturally evolved one from another, from simple forms to more complex ones, and so all the beings present today appeared, as well as man, about whom he says he would have come from a monkey specie. According to him, there are no species created from the beginning by the Creator, but everything evolves on the basis of the mutations in the body.⁸⁸ Darwinism saw pure natural causes in the natural phenomena; everything is evolution and natural selection. It was difficult for Darwin to find a bridge between the natural sciences and theology because he never knew the theology of the Holy Fathers and the fact that the existence of the world is based first of all on the unlimited love of God for everything He created.⁸⁹

Darwin's ideas were used by the partisans of colonialism, communism, of dialectic materialism, etc. Starting from the work *Origin of Species* by Darwin a great emphasis of the dialectic atheism was adopted beginning as far back as the 19th century, when the atheist and nihilist doctrine emerged.⁹⁰ God is not Life, but death, the divine love is not the beginning of this world, but hazard. The sociologists, philosophers and theologians of the death of God thought that the more modern the world becomes, the less religious is, thinking more and more of the beginning and end of the world. The concerns of the contemporary theology is no longer focused on what was called *the death of God*, but yet this radical theological movement continues to find its echo in the moments of transition and crisis of the Western religious conscience, just like in the post-modern theology or theologies.⁹¹ In the context of the secularised and global materialism of the contemporary society, the theological thought of Father Staniloae on creation, drafted and affirmed in the context of the atheist dialectic communist materialism, constitutes into a basic theological source for combating the indifferentist post-modernism of today's world. The theonomous cosmology of Father Staniloae is the most eloquent Christian manifest in the fight against the dialectic atheism.

⁸⁸ Idem, *Rationality of Creation and Its Implications*, p. 33

⁸⁹ Cf. Dumitru Horia Ionescu, *What Darwin Did Not Know*, in *Lumina Newspaper* of 15 December 2009

⁹⁰ Cf. Rev. Univ. Prof. Cr. Nicolae Achimescu, *From the Death of God to the Post-Modern Religion (I)*, in the "Lumina de duminica" weekly of 13 June 2010.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*.

IV.2 – „Big Bang” Theory and Its Development in the 20th Century

The 20th century marks the passage from the image of the static universe to that in movement. The idea of a universe in movement imposes the existence of a beginning and of an end, creating a favourable frame of dialogue with the religions that accept the faith in the beginning and end of the universe, contributing to what some researchers would name the greatest discovery of the 20th century: the expansion of the Universe, the “Big Bang” theory.⁹² This is considered to be the result of the scientific progress registered in the 20th century. When referring to this aspect, Father Dumitru Stăniloae says: “the Orthodox theology takes scientific progress into account only to the extent to which science brings a contribution to the progress of the human spirit, and only to the extent to which it deepens the experience of its own spiritual reality and of the supreme spiritual reality in man, none of them reduced at the physical and chemical level.”⁹³

I analysed in the present subchapter the theory of “Big bang” and its development in the 20th century, opposing it, in the end, the patristic theonomous theology that Father Dumitru Stăniloae deepened in the 20th century. We see, for example, that the physicists say that one cannot speak of space, time and matter before Big Bang, because whatever exists is situated in the physic, Universe, in time and space. Similarly, as Father Stăniloae notices from the theological perspective: “the place and time are the basic conditions of all their other versions.”⁹⁴ Everything existent is submitted to a place and time different from its existence, with mutual limits. In Saint Maxim the Confessor’s teaching, the substance suggests the limit and end, unlike God, Who is above existence.⁹⁵

Today, Father Stăniloae’s theological thought on creation can be the bridge of dialogue between theology and science. The cosmological vision of Father Stăniloae – in which you can feel at home and a traditionalist Christian, as well as scholar without ideological prejudices – opens various extensive perspectives to the new physics and scientific ethics, to the science of communication and spirituality; it recuperates the world of values within the framework of the

⁹² Cf. Deacon Sorin Mihalache, *The Light of the Unseen One*, Ed. Basilica of the Romanian Patriarchate, Bucharest, 2008, p. 472.

⁹³ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Theology and the Church*, p. 216, apus Alexei Nesteruk, *The Universe in Communion. To a Neo-patristic Synthesis of Theology and Science*, translation from English by Mihai-Silviu Chitilă, Ec. Curtea Veche, Bucharest, 2009, p. 2096.

⁹⁴ Idem, *Introduction, Translation and Notes to Saint Maxim the Confessor, Ambigua*, in *Writings, first part*, in P.S.B., vol. 80, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucharest, 1983, note 233, p. 263.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 260.

new scientific thought on reality.”⁹⁶ It is a vision that discovers the cosmic greatness and responsibility of man, contributing to the contemporary effort for recuperating man and the sense of creation. It is one more proof of the genius of Father Stăniloae as well as of the fruitfulness of the neo-patristic theonomic analysis of the creation.

IV.3 Evolutionism and Creationism

In the sub-chapter dedicated to the controversy between evolutionism and creationism I analysed point by point the main aspects of this polemics from the perspective of the patristic theonomous cosmology. In this sense, we estimated the present relationship between evolutionism and creationism. The former takes the ascending way of the species, while the latter takes the descending way: man at the end of creation. The Greek cosmology makes the basis of evolutionism, and Revelation makes the basis of creationism. Some researchers tried an unsuccessful harmonisation, for example Origen, Augustin, one of them pre-existentialist, and the other one dualist in the sense of the incompatibility of the spirit with the matter. It is true that besides creationism and evolutionism there is a Christian evolutionism which does not want to overlook creationism, but in a different way. On one hand, the world is considered created ex nihilo by God, but on the other hand, evolution is the result of the indirect intervention of God, through some seminal reasons⁹⁷ or some secondary causes⁹⁸, which operate determinist and autonomous from their Creator. But either creationism or evolutionism, both theories overlook the presence and continuous work of God in creation. While the creationists are mostly deist, because they isolate the divinity in transcendent, the evolutionists are more inclined to pantheism, because they overlook the existence of the personal God.⁹⁹ The mechanistic conception and the evolutionist metaphysics are the main obstacles in the way of the theonomous cosmology, which sees the intervention of God in creation through its spiritual, rational and energetic depths. Evolutionism and creationism are autonomous theories, one of them atheist, the other one deist, one ascendant, the other degrading/descendent (the evil present in the creation),

⁹⁶ Deacon Dr. Doru Costacjhe, *Virtuality and Actuality. From the Quantic Physics to the Anthropic Cosmology of Father Dumitru Stăniloae*, in *Science and Theology. Preliminaries for Dialogue*, Ed. Eonul Dogmatic, Bucharest, 2001, p. 219

⁹⁷ Blessed Augustin. *De gen, ad litt.*, I-IX (XVII).XXXIV. col. 338: The same as the seeds invisibly comprise what the tree will be, so does the world include in itself everything that would manifest later on, not only the sky and the sun, but also other beings which God potentially produced, as in a cause belonging to them.”; apud Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *The creation of the world in the light of the Holy Scriptures and of the contemporary science*, in *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, year XII, issue 241, 15 February 2000, p. 3.

⁹⁸ Catechism de l'Eglise Calolique, Mame/Pion. Paris, 1992. p. 74.

⁹⁹ Lucian Blaga, *Trilogy of Knowledge*, Ed. Humanitas, Bucharest, 1993, p. 127.

one comes in contradiction with reality, the other one with the Revelation through the divine Providence, one optimist, the other one pessimist.

Today, basic for understanding correctly the creation of the world from the Christian Orthodox perspective of our theology is the thought of Father Dumitru Staniloae. In this sense, a concrete achievement of the desideratum of the meeting between theology and the scientific representation of the world is formulated in the cosmologic theonomous conception of Father Dumitru Staniloae. His analysis, his insistence on the rationality of creation is the result of his intuition of the new directions of the contemporary physics and of the desire to favour the dialogue between science and theology. Having always affirmed that the Holy Fathers must not be assumed ad litteram but creatively, as a lesson for what we have to do today, as Church and theology, Father Staniloae built a theological image of the world in patristic spirit, taking into account the new scientific representation with its directions so diversified, such as the rationality of creation and the articulation of the perspectives between man and cosmos, in a coherent, unified frame. Father Staniloae, just like other thinkers involved in the neo-patristic analysis, does not deal very much with an explicit foundation in the new scientific paradigm, showing that a Christian has nothing to do but to interpret theologically the ideas of rationality and becoming of the universe, essential ideas for the contemporary science.¹⁰⁰

To end with, taking into account evolutionism and creationism, from the perspective of the discoveries of the contemporary technologies, we can affirm, just like Father Staniloae, “that we cannot understand the nature and significance of science and technology without recognising a high destiny of the man, the call of man to find his fulfilment in God”.¹⁰¹ This destiny protects man against all fears of technology: “It has the duty to rid man of the feeling he is crushed by technology, the same as the Gospel and writings of the Holy Fathers released him of the feeling he was at the mercy of some capricious beings that used nature arbitrarily”.¹⁰²

IV. 4 Cosmology of Teilhard de Chardin

From Scientific and Orthodox Dogmatic

During the last two hundred years theology and science have been in a conflict conditioned by the two ways of seeing the appearance of the universe, namely the evolutionist

¹⁰⁰ Deacon Dr. Doru Costache, *A Meeting Already Achieved: Vision of Father Dumitru Staniloae on the Theological Relationship between Man and World*, in *Science and Theology. Preliminaries for Dialogue*, Ed. Eonul Dogmatic, Bucharest, 2001, p. 55.

¹⁰¹ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Staniloae, *Theology and Church*, p. 225, apud Alexei Nestruc, *op. cit.* p. 64.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*.

one, typical for the largest part of the scholars, and the creationist one, appeared as a reaction to the first one, especially in the Western Christian world, and developed during the last half of the 20th century in the Protestant and Neo-protestant world. Last century, many theologians, especially Westerners, tried to find things that unite theology and science in the way they explain the appearance of the universe. One of them was Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881 – 1955).¹⁰³ He belonged to the trend that tried to smooth the way between the dogma of creation and the thesis of evolution sustained by science. He is one of the most outstanding representatives of this trend, his “catalyst element and engine”.¹⁰⁴ In his cosmic genesis, everything starts from the cell, while the passage to the cell marks the beginning of life. According to him, God prepares the primordial soup and ensures its germination while the electromagnetic forces ensure the over-individuality. Teilhard’s anthropogenesis comprises: intellect, socialisation and Christification. Cosmos evolves consciously through man, while man appeared through a transformation of life, humanising, thinking. According to Teilhard de Chardin the great stages of the universal dynamics or of the evolution are the following: materialisation,¹⁰⁵ vitalisation¹⁰⁶ (pre-human life), humanisation of life¹⁰⁷, and super-humanisation of life.¹⁰⁸ In Orthodoxy, the world existed potentially at God, just as it existed afterwards, created out of nothing, in time. Christ, the Son of God as Pantocrator is not present in Teilhard’s cosmology, so that the effort of the scholar has no value but in re-launching the dialogue between theology and science with no basic connotations in the Christian cosmology of Father Stăniloae’s teonomous cosmology.

We should appreciate Teilhard de Chardin’s effort to harmonise the scientific research with the Christian theology, but we must always take into account the difference of option between the scientific research based on the discovery of the concrete in nature and the theological choice to speak of the reality of the presence of God in creation, on the basis of the supernatural revelation, with faith as basis. Taking all this into account, we can affirm that

¹⁰³ Cf. Rev. Prof. Cornel Sârbu, *The Theological System of Teilhard of Chardin*, in *Ortodoxia*, year XXV, issue 4, oct – Dec 1973, Bucharest, p. 516. A short presentation of his life and work, see la Bone L.E., “Teilhard de Chardin (Pierre)”, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, 1967, t. XII, p. 977—978. Here are some the theological works about him: H. de Lubac, *La religieuse du Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*, Paris, 1962 ; G. Krespy, *La Pensée théologique de Teilhard de Chardin*, Paris, 1961 ; C. D. Armagnac, *La Pensée du Pierre Teilhard de Chardin comme apologetique moderne*, Nouv. Eev. Th., 1962, p. 598—621. One of the most serious studies about Teilhard is by Christopher F. Monney, *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ*, London, 1966. Alois Guggenberger offers us a short good presentation about him: *Teilhard de Chardin - Versuch einer Weltsumme*, Mainz, 1963.

¹⁰⁴ Colombo Giuseppe, *La création*, în *Bilan de la théologie du XX-e siècle*, Tournai Paris, t. II, p. 275, §. u.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Teilhard de Chardin *L'activation de l'énergie*, p. 220 ; *Le phénomène humain*, p. 200.

¹⁰⁶ Wildiers, Avant-propos, în *L'apparition de l'homme*, p. 13 §. u.

¹⁰⁷ Teilhard de Chardin., *Science and Synthesis*, Bucharest, 1969, p. 312, see also *L'activation de l'énergie*, p. 382.

¹⁰⁸ Idem, *La place de l'homme dans la nature*, p. 162.

Teilhard de Chardin's attempt is interesting from the perspective of the dialogue between theology and science, but it created great question marks when speaking about the dogmatic teaching of the Christian Church over two thousand years old, and about the creation of the world. So, we can see that Teilhard de Chardin, who was coming from the Roman Catholic theology, tributary to scholastics, could do only a juxtaposition of theology over the scientific research. Had he referred to the thought of the Holy Fathers of the first millennium and especially of the 4th century, just like Father Dumitru Stăniloae, certainly he would have tried, just like the Cappadochian fathers, to use scientific research in the theological argumentation of the teaching of faith about the creation of the world according to the supernatural revelation of the Holy Scriptures. For us, those living today, the effort of Teilhard de Chardin can be only encouraging, but our duty is to turn the work of this great scholar of the 20th century to the patristic basis of the relation between theology and science, following the example of the cosmologic neo-patristic thought of Father Dumitru Stăniloae.

*IV.5 Theonomous Patristic Cosmology in the Interpretation of Father Dumitru Stăniloae
Compared to the Autonomous Rationalist Cosmologies*

At present, two ways of understanding cosmology are discussed: on one hand, an autonomous one and on the other hand, the theonomous one. In fact, the two cosmologies are two destinies: the former leads to secularisation (the autonomous cosmology) and the latter is crowned with the transfiguration of the world (the theonomous cosmology).¹⁰⁹ In the subchapter entitled Patristic theonomous cosmology in the interpretation of Father Stăniloae compared to the other autonomous rationalist cosmologies I showed the major co-ordinates of the cosmological doctrine of patristic and neo-patristic nature of which brilliant representative is Father Stăniloae, who brought a substantial contribution of the Romanian theology to the Christian cosmology.

While affirming the continuous creation, the patristic theonomous cosmology overcomes both the sterile polemics between evolutionism and creationism and the alleged conflict with philosophy and science. It “gets along very well with any scientific theory on the universe, provided the latter one does not exceed its limits and try to deny with impudence what is outside the field of vision”.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu și Diacon Doru Costache, *Introduction to the Orthodox Dogmatics*, Ed. Libra, Bucharest, 1997, p. 103.

¹¹⁰ Vladimir Lossky, *Mystic Theology of the Eastern Church*, Ed. Anastasia, București, 1992, p. 132-133.

Father Dumitru Popescu, the continuator of the theonomus cosmology of Father Stăniloae in the Romanian theology says: “This theonomous cosmology detaches both from creationism and from evolutionism. It cannot accept either creationism, which considers that the world was perfect when created, getting into conflict with evolutionism, or the evolutionism, because this one thinks the world develops through itself, with no connection with God. The theonomous theology exceeds these two tendencies through the conception on the process of continuous creation which stems from the early creation, by which God took the world out of nothingness, and is crowned with the final creation, when everything is changed in Christ, as Creator and Saving Logos, in a new heaven and earth. This continuous creation is possible only to the extent to which the Creator keeps an inner relation with the universe through His uncreated energies and brings things to existence through their inner reason at the right time, according to His wisdom”.¹¹¹

In this context of the presentation of the patristic theology we can affirm today that the only visible alternative for the good physic spiritual health of the contemporary man remains his return to a theonomous cosmology which enables him to rise over the contingency of the world over here and get the true freedom as son of God. The great merit of this theonomous cosmology consists in the fact that it allows the Christian theology to speak about Christ not only as Saviour Logos, but also as Creator Logos. In a world dominated by anthropocentrism, by the tendency to put man instead of God, as a result of an autonomous cosmology which considers itself self sufficient, the Eastern patristic theology offers us the vision of a theonomous cosmology in which man, cosmos and Church are touched by the rays of the divine uncreated light which elevates and transfigures the entire creation.¹¹²

The theonomous cosmology of Father Staniloae based on the patristic thought and set up by the divine Revelation of the Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition is receptive towards the progress of science, so that it turns out to be the platform of a good articulation of the dialogue between theology and science.

Conclusions

The Orthodox cosmology of Father Staniloae, worked out in the course of several years and included not only in his treatise of dogmatic theology, but also in many of his books, studies

¹¹¹ Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu *Orthodoxy and Contemporariness*, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucharest, 1996, p. 186.

¹¹² *Ibidem*, p. 194-198.

and articles, can be considered as an original contribution to the development of the Romanian theology and of the Orthodox theology, in general. As I have tried to show, it has strong patristic and Bible roots, a special amplitude interfering with almost all the other chapters of dogmatic, with mutual benefit, a dynamism based on the teaching about the uncreated energies and on the Trinitarian and human personalism, as well as a major spiritual component designed to exceed all the scholastic or neo-scholastic patterns opening new perspectives in the present cosmologic debates through its theonomous expression.¹¹³ On the basis of the patristic theology that Father Dumitru Staniloae affirmed so deeply we can ascertain today the importance of the greatest theologian of the 20th century for the theonomous cosmology based on patristic. This theological thought about creation that Father Dumitru Staniloae developed in his theonomous cosmology is continued at the end of the 20th century by reverend professors Dumitru Popescu and Ioan Ica senior. Rev. Prof. Dumitru Popescu offered us an excellent layout of a contemporary interpretation of the Bible content on cosmo-anthropo-genesis,¹¹⁴ based both on the Bible narration of the Holy Scriptures and on the patristic theology. Unlike the Western autonomous dualist cosmology of Augustinian type, which has never solved satisfactorily the relation between the transcendence and immanence of God, between the almightiness of God and the movement of creation, which fact led to the emergence of a super-naturalist creationism opposed to the naturalist evolutionism, the theonomous patristic Bible cosmology exceeds both tendencies through the conception on the process of continuous creation, which starts with the initial creation and crowns with the final creation, when the entire cosmos becomes a new heaven and earth.¹¹⁵ As regards Father Ioan Ica senior, his cosmological considerations are extremely precious because they reject the secularising tendencies that the autonomous conception on the world involves and declares in favour of the theonomous character of cosmology. For our distinguished theologian, the theonomous cosmology is the only one able to reconcile the transcendence and immanence of God in creation. In this sense, he shows that the truth revealed concerning the creation of the world puts up with the conquests of contemporary science and

¹¹³ Rev. Lecturer Dr. Ștefan Buchiu, *Cosmology in the Work of Rev. Stăniloae and Its Ecological Implications*, p. 74.

¹¹⁴ Rev. Univ. Prof. Ioan Ica, *Theonomous Cosmology, A New Perspective on the Christian Cosmology*, in *Homage to Rev. Academician Dumitru Popescu*, Ed. Reintregirea, Alba Iulia, 2005, p. 85

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 86.

exceeds the old antagonism between creationism and evolutionism, between theology and the contemporary science.¹¹⁶

While reflecting attentively on the theonomous patristic theology we see that it is the answer that theology gives today to autonomous science. In conclusion, one can say that – through the stress laid on the inner rationality of creation and through its implications extremely complex in the field of spiritual or cultural knowledge – Father Staniloae unfolded a monumental work of reconstruction of the Orthodox theology, in general, and of the Romanian one, in particular, on Bible and patristic bases in order to change it into an invisible insurmountable obstacle in the way of the totalitarian ideologies.¹¹⁷

His theological work, of deep patristic inspiration and high theological development, of large opening to science, constitutes a climax of the development of the Romanian Orthodox theology,¹¹⁸ a pure rich spring of the Orthodox spirituality, a source of inspiration and meditation not only for theologians, but also for the contemporary Christians willing to give a plenary spiritual meaning to their life. The way not so much linear as cyclic in which Rev. Prof. Dumitru Staniloae analysed the theology of creation, with insistence, resumption and large deepening, makes his cosmology be the element of the dialogue with the contemporary science and society of today's Orthodox theology. This is why we can consider Father Dumitru Staniloae as the gift of God to the Romanian Christianity and to universal Orthodoxy in the 20th century.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Popescu, *Theonomous Cosmology in the Thought of Rev. Prof. Dr. Ioan Ica*, in *Homage to Rev. Univ. Prof. Dr. Ioan Ica*, Ed. Renasterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 104 - 105

¹¹⁷ Idem, *Rationality of Creation and Its Implications*, p. 35

¹¹⁸ Rev. Lecturer dr. Ioan C. Tesu, *Theology of Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Staniloae, a Theology of Love and Dedication, of Prayer and Perfection*, in *Ortodoxia*, issue 3-4, 2003, p. 85