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### **The Religious Notion in Epistemology**

*Loredana TERECA-VLAD*  
*tefan Adrian ANDRIE*

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# The Religious Notion in Epistemology

Loredana TEREC-VLAD<sup>1</sup>  
Ștefan Adrian ANDRIEȘ<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

*The aim of this article is to highlight the issue of religiousness from the epistemological perspective. This involves, on the one hand, a scientific approach, and on the other hand the relation between science and religion as the basis of the spirituality of the entire existence, by approaching the religious exposure at social level. If at the scientific level religion occupies a secondary place in terms of the object of research, at the social and anthropological level it plays a vital role by approaching the divine-human relationship of all human expressions in relation to the creation and the Creator.*

*Addressing this type of knowledge in such a sensitive field indicates the moment when the question surrounded by a whole plea that defines the relation between mystical and metaphysical knowledge is raised. We cannot not pretend to know religion as we know biology, but we also cannot say that we will know religion as we know mathematics, even if in they all lead to the same result.*

*Since they are metaphysical or transcendental, religious sciences require a special approach regarding the object of research, because everything that is said or approved will permanently reflect uncertainty and ambiguity within not knowing, precisely by the very essence of the great mystery of the central point that gives vitality to the whole circle of religious knowledge. We shall systematically present the relation between the religious content and what can be perceived and known by using all our systems of understanding and exposure in order to provide a satisfactory answer both from the symbolic point of view as well as by indicating the type of knowledge applied for finding the epistemological relevance.*

## Keywords:

*religious epistemology, knowledge, mystic, Creator, anthropology;*

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<sup>1</sup> Loredana TEREC-VLAD - Univerity tefan cel Mare, Suceava, Romania, Email Address loredana.vlad83@gmail.com, 0040749978910

<sup>2</sup> Ștefan Adrian ANDRIEȘ - University of Lausanne, Lausanne, Switzerland, Email Address andriestefan92@yahoo.com, 0041775037019

### 1. Conceptual clarifications:

Seen from the epistemological perspective, the issue of religiosity only brings along a scientific approach of something that cannot be expressed, of the inexpressible into the expressible, of the unscientific in a world of exactness and verification, in a field where it is impossible to experience any empirical form of methodical religious knowledge and inevitably in ethics. If we take into consideration the perishable and the imperceptible, we may find some overlapping attempt; however, it vanishes along with the affirmation of the indication of discernment of the mutual point of communication regarding the object of religion or spirituality in a field of verification.

From the etymology of the word religion, we may see, even in a somewhat scientific way that the object of research is required to be a transcendental one, which was sent from someone to someone else or in other words an entity that is to be researched along with its mere appearance. From the entire religious content that can be likened to the human practice, it is generally believed that this experience of the individual with the assumed given that is sent to be perceived and finally designated to bring a common point is nothing more than mere research of personal-human type, with the idea of God or the Absolute as a general factor of research, testing, verification or belief.

Therefore, in this area it is not necessary to say that a certain issue has found its solution and everything is over; on the contrary, it all just starts because the consequences show the beginning of a great edifice, which, in this case, may bring personal glory or may destroy an entire masterpiece, just by a simple law of solving a tiny piece of freedom. We can take primary philosophy as an example, as it adds an argument to the connection between God and man. *Given that the matter is an imperfection, the opposition between good and evil, or between God and matter, does not go beyond the world of contingency and change. Like in the case of Plato and Aristotle, who reject dualism in ontology, the unity principle is being seeked; therefore, the Stagirite finds it necessary to become one with the being, change, multiplicity and imperfection being subordinated to the pure act* (Mihai, V., 2011, pp.63-81).

So the epistemological issue of religion and thus of ethics involves a direct approach of the human behavior and hence the experiencing of the Absolute in any moment and in any place. Since the religious issue is fully linked to the ethical issue, we can conclude that this interdependency could entail a viable research area for a lot of ideas,

which would come between the two opposing elements that begin to attract each other, meaning that the place that shows the presence of a small detail related to the place of religion in the individual's life reveals the achievement of the work described by religious ethics, which is exactly the point of the mystical experience that occurs between the Creator and the individual, between the divine and the human, because approaching the religious issue from the scientific point of view brings along the object of the research – the components and the given are the foundations of the final outcome of the research. *For Christian pragmatism talks about serving one another. Christian love at first level is equivalent to devotion, acceptance and forgiveness. The social expression of Christianity states the ethical values taking the form of philanthropy and charity* (Sandu, A., Caras, A., 2013, pp.72-99).

Why is the issue of the object of research raised in religion? This inner or spiritual issue has no other form of expression but the sublime, presented in its exposure; imposing the religious activity is not possible unless it brings along the solution, that is, for instance, the origin of the conceptual assertion into the existence. Speaking strictly in terms of religion, together with the creation of man came the scientific solution, with the inevitable response to reduce everything to one Creator.

So the role of the deviation from pure reality towards mystical reality, both of them being reduced to a religious experience, led to the essence of the religious and scientific expression of exposing the inter-human and human-divine relations. *From the scientist's perspective, the act of finding in research is experienced as a liberation with euphoric, tranquilizing meanings, while for the religious man it is only further deepening into the doxology of God* (Lemeni, A., 2007, pp. 281-288).

So, speaking at a broader level about the latest issues of science, we shall see that the leading place in religious and theological research fully refers to a superior entity, which will never fail in this view, but will add vitality to deepening the mysteries of the cosmos. *The dialogue between religion and science is characterized by a mutually beneficial relationship; however, it would be absurd to say that religion is dependent on science* (Lemeni, A., 2007, pp.281-288).

Thus, the object of research in religion cannot be compatible, for instance, with the object of research in physics or any other real science. It should be noted that the background of the so-called development in religion is an environment of evolution, durability and transience at the

same time. Then, the following question would inevitably be raised: How can religious development be assured or where can there be found the proper environment for sacred development, since the maximum already exists everywhere? And we can answer by taking into consideration the definition provided by Eliade. *According to him, religious experience is a symbolic transcendental relation; it represents an interpretation of the world from the sacred point of view, thus it can be seen as existential hermeneutics in the field of the sacred, the field of holiness* (Codoban, A., 1998).

We must emphasize the fact that, when regarded from the epistemological perspective, religion reaches a more sensitive point, because all knowledge arising from it is only the point of confluence between the human mind and what subsists from nature to the Creator, so the interpretation only refers to the similarity between what is shown to be real and the entire existential, that is the descent from the Supreme Being.

## **2. Religious knowledge in relation to the human person**

We try to expose in an accessible way the existential state of man in relation to the manifestation, so that we can approach different ways of interpreting the social thinking at a high level of the influence of the ephemeral within the perpetual. We can approach this field from another perspective, that of uncertainty or anticipation up to the point where everything is reduced to a simple individual mental value. In order for religion to be the object of truth, it must not only be verified, as it usually happens with all new ideas; its meaning must be deeply understood in order to discover the source of religious and scientific meaning in a rational way. *Pragmatically speaking, we can say that some of our own rational beliefs are true, but a better idea that would be accepted may occur at any time. From here we start with the idea that there will always be room for better faith or a new idea, and hence for new evidence, hypotheses, and a whole new vocabulary* (Rorty, R., 2000, pp.75-96).

Therefore, things always get a rather individualized sense at first, which subsequently extends to a multicultural level or simply a level of acceptance, or to a lower social class in terms of knowing the meaning of the new ideology. Such cases call for the Aristotelian example; the centre reflects a mind which generates the idea, which infiltrates around until penetrating the entire universe of development. *Thus, the scientist becomes*

*an example of morality; he needs to express himself in an altruistic way, which is favourable to his acts* (Rorty, R., 2000, pp. 97-112).

Rational knowledge or any type of verification are not enough for demonstrating the validity of the existence of truth, because, as we have already stated, the sphere of the concept under discussion, if we may say so, is not purely material or tangible, but rather provides uncertainty and even despair, because, from the epistemic point of view, syllogistic knowledge is a demonstrative type of knowledge, sensory knowledge being undoubtedly necessary (Francis, P., 1997, p. 93).

But since the human mind is reaching a very high point in all areas, the logic of the religious thinking within the universe of the human will be demonstrated, especially since a theoretical epistemological demonstration is only possible through the research carried out by the human mind, the indissolubility of man from his central point and especially the reverberations stemming from the detailed research of the natural-evolutionary history of the universe in which we operate. So, if we take an overall look at each moment within the Universal Rationality, dissociating the objective from the imaginary, which is driven by fear or desire, we believe superior promptitude will be provided in terms of reactions (Iftode, C., 2010, pp. 140-161).

Taking this into account, we can say that the struggle between rationality, imagination and reality is only a space of simplicity that leads to an abyss of self ignorance and hence universally valid ignorance in all the ways of religious, mystical and metaphysical perception or simply spiritual or evolutionary knowledge, if we may call it that way, beyond our way of paying any interest for determining its reality. Regardless of how we wish to accept or deny finding a new thing in the development of religious knowledge, we face failure because the belief that the own meaning and content can be reformulated according to what we know and thus by making statements is one of the most critical mistakes of the time, a mistake of metaphysics. Since metaphysicians are always striving to define the substance of pure quality, namely to say what cannot be said, the indescribable, they finally see that the indication of knowledge has nothing to do with pure knowledge (Schlick, M., 2003, pp.51-60). Another problem regarding our way of understanding is the very initiative to refresh an old idea, or this determines the primordial idea and the ones that follow to lose substance. At some point we can say the way of human understanding only regards a succession of ideas,

inevitably leading to an incomprehensible amalgam, since the problem of assessing and selecting a scientific theory will inevitably arise from the desire to make progress in knowledge, but will reach a point where the idea that there are too few absolute truths will fade. The tendency to improve knowledge and the practical need to increase curiosity will lead to transcending the current idea (Hirghiduș, I., 2001, pp. 78-87). But transcending an idea will inevitably lead to a major problem because its transcendental structure makes this being that is full of endless substance reach its end by accepting a generally valid theory, which of course would not satisfy all the aspirants, especially if we take into account the implication of the definitive theory for the consciousness of the existence; however, it can provide an answer which may not necessarily be satisfactory; however, maybe it can increase credibility in a field characterized by logical and metaphysical uncertainty, because a transcendental subject is distinct from the finite subjects in terms of the definitive structure of subjectivity that appears to be imperiously necessary as an epistemological element. So this is a reflexive character of scientific knowledge within the development of structural theories (Pârvu, I., 1984, pp. 25-43). In the part that shows an inclined perspective towards science and development from the observational and meditative perspective, the attention is drawn upon the fact that religious knowledge is different even in terms of its most profound relevance, which regards human behaviour in relation to what determines the action, in relation to the outcome of the action and evidently in relation to what is called the ideal of creativity.

Since up to now we have explained the interest of epistemology in religion and its relationship with the object of research, now we should say that the internal object of our research is based on the internal idea of religion, which is the Supreme Being, the Absolute, the Supreme, the Sublime and last but not least God himself. This is possible only if the research in this tenebrous space of uncertainty and of the unknown is allowed, because ambiguity as our interest in finding or not finding a path will increase, and thus not knowing will be directly proportional to deepening knowledge. Since what we have been given is metaphysical, if we can say so, we will never know for sure the essence of the thing itself, because the term God is a metaphysical term, and if things are given this interpretation, the concept cannot even be verified.

*But saying that God exists means bringing to consciousness an idea that can be neither true nor false, so neither accepted nor rejected* (Brian, D., 1997, pp. 9-18). So the scientific explanation can only be formal or representative, but under no circumstances can there be any hint of real, pure truth, within this convoluted explanation. Having plenty of choice in accepting the existence of superiority, denying it or simply being indifferent to it, one will eventually reach the conclusion that all the variants are exactly the opposite of what they intend to explain or to bring into discussion. This is because the *principle of verifying the divine existence does not prove anything. It does not compulsorily require giving up the idea of God, since it cannot be falsified. Now it would be possible to ask if there are any reasons to prove that God cannot exist* (Brian, D., 1997, pp. 9-18).

Living with the uncertainty of knowing or not knowing leads to total indifference; total indifference is not permissible within research, since the final result should be full of hope or at least full of content. Thus, our interest should be otherwise oriented because *our goal is not relevant if the Supreme beings do not hold the leading role everywhere, this role regarding for most nations the relative type of relationship, or how old man's relationship is with the past, all these being transcendental realities of holiness* (Eliade, M., 1995, pp. 34-35). The world of the sacred provides some life in this existence which is full of empirical waste, leading the human person into an abyss of darkness that is different from the primary significance, because along with religion man himself becomes a cosmic centre, since the relationship with everything that regards the inner experience defines him as a tumultuous centre of existence that accepts existential change as the whole connection of dichotomy.

Knowledge at a direct or indirect level is confirmed by man's spiritual indisposition to be connected to the Creator, so the created is inevitably different from the primordial conception of the divine-human dialogue. Therefore, *in the epistemological consequence of metaphysics, which is based on the lack of proportion of the divine in relation to the created finite, the result is the inability of directly knowing the divine being* (Cusanus, N., 2008, pp. 119-134).

The essence of this ancestral, transcendental human-cosmic relationship inevitably entails a socio-cultural interpretation and an entire plea that rotates in the sense of the real conception regarding the mind that brings to the fore this kind of cultural-religious manifestation. All manifestations of this type involve some actions that reflect the history



in its rich valences, by accumulations of actions that emanate from the wonderful expression of metaphysics.

If we look back, we see that the world is viewed from different perspectives, the physical, the cosmic and the religious-anthropological perspective; these ways of looking at things meet at some point because eternity at the religious level may correspond to some extent to the eternal transformation of the world, which leads to its self-transformation in an eternal absolute. *Surrounding the image of the universe with eternal mobility, which is well known to be related to thermal death, led to the idea of the dissolution of the cosmic content in thermal radiation, also penetrating the theological ideas as ultimate solution, which is the divinity* (Barrow, J., 2007, pp. 32-47).

The world we live in is a world that is constantly growing, but is centred on man, in the fullness of the grace of transforming it into an eternal union with universality. So the existence all things has its origins in unifying everything that surrounds man so that everything gets a religious, anthropological, cosmic and transcendental meaning, since *the internal chemical and mineral development, which corresponds to lower stages of the existence, is rational, but does not have any goal; its goal is the condition of human existence, these matters being aware of their role in the universe* (Stăniloae, D., 2000, pp. 9-23).

All the means of developing the cosmic mass are closely related to the religious activity; that is why anthropology highlights the ancestral connection of man with the land, with nature itself, with the important events that happen globally and that embed all human ties which are founded on the adoption of the same religious reason that grounds the whole historic construction of man's inability to loosen his moral and spiritual roots from nature or the Creator in the centre of his living.

All these have their meaning in the explanation of the theory of their manifestation, because their way of action explain the rationality of their manifestation and the goal they exist for; however, this rationality must be retrospectively analyzed by the human mind in order to reach the conclusion that things within them are nothing but that manifestation of the existence.

*Rationalism is strongly inclined to providing metaphysical arguments, since it is a fully unitary and ordered system. So if we try to penetrate its principles by using our reason, we will regard the diversity of phenomena that are revealed by the senses as necessary consequences of these principles* (Flonta, M., 2008, pp. 98-114).

Religion requires a different system of approach because its object of discussion is not only represented by what is impalpable, but also by the human behaviour, which involves a whole creation at historical scale, bringing to the fore all that has been said and shown by people from the divine perspective, meaning that the idea of all that is beautiful, divine and even materially-constructive mostly regarded a whole divine amalgam, namely the political system has always been actively involved in the life of the society, which was, in turn, always involved in the religious life. Carefully analyzing the manifestation of nations throughout history regarding a divine concept, we conclude that *the life of the prehistoric man, like all modes of social unity, is marked by events that accompany the human life from birth to death, being the core activities of the human prototype* (Stan, A., Rus, R.,1991, pp. 15-21).

Therefore, in order to get to certain observations, mankind reached a peak of divinity at the expense of their own beliefs; and this happened in order to unmask the inner feeling of the existence of supremacy in the human individual's soul, especially since man externalizes his inner side only in those moments of extreme tension, if not in the moments of fear of the unknown that characterizes a life lived in an environment that is not enough known in order to face all the ways of solving the issues.

Viewed from the scientific point of view, religion comes to add some development to anthropological research because this „given” requires a lot of other behaviours that are based on the anthroposophy manifestations, since any human manifestation is the result of a more or less accessible hazard observed by the brain. In his integrity, man has many spiritual or material representations. If the human being as a whole adds value to the universe, then his interpretation is cosmic, it is characterized by a different level of observation, because man is not just an ordinary object, randomly placed, but rather the vitality of everything that existed before him.

Since there are a lot of indications regarding the existential body itself, its expression takes a leading role in shaping the human ego in relation to the other cosmic elements. So the body and its representations are tributaries to the social state, to the view of the world in its integrity and of course to defining the person. Therefore, the body is a symbolic construction and not a significant reality. Hence we see the multitude of ideas that lead to the inconsistent, unusual and

contradictory meaning and character of the body, which makes the connection from one society to another (David, le B., 2002, pp. 11-26).

### **3. Conclusions**

Concluding what has been said about the epistemology of religion, we believe that religion has a key role in the system of defining man as an existential factor in this universe, because the world in its whole needs the mystical manifestations that find their meaning in proving that the entire society is formed of the definitions of the ways of manifestation, whether they are determined by the living world, or by the external representations of man. If movement itself did not raise the issue of divinity, it would be a virtual world, characterized by an extremely strong individualism in a valley of death; but this thing changes along with the action of the last indication of movement, of thoughtfulness itself, of the human actions in relation to infinity, to eternity.

The relationship of the human individual with the Supreme Being, which is relevant for the divine-human relationship, is the object of research that we have analyzed in this study, since it is impossible to approach religion from any other perspective than that of man's actions in nature and in the entire universe. The problem of the relation between man, society, history, religiousness and metaphysical experience is solved by the multitude of events that take place at anthropological level and that will establish, through their eventuality and their object of research, what is that transcendent that adds interpretation to the world in relation to the universe, to the world that develops in an alarming way and leads the existence towards a wonderful place.

The concept of religion in knowledge brings to the fore precisely what is missing, namely an overview of the concept of world – a world that is not only regarded from the scientific and historical perspective, but rather from the metaphysical, transcendental, spiritual and, last but not least, mystical perspective, because a perfect universe needs the defining factor, which is God.

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