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Dumitru Stăniloae's Influence on Jürgen Moltmann's Trinitarian and Ecological Theology

Abstract

Dumitru Stăniloae and Jürgen Moltmann are recognized as two world-famous theologians, that contribute in a unique way to the ecumenical encounter between the Orthodox and the Evangelical theologies of the 20th century. Stăniloae's influence on Moltmann's trinitarian and ecological theology can be considered a constructive presence of the Romanian orthodox tradition in the international discourse. Both Moltmann and Stăniloae promote a perichoretic and trinitarian worldview with direct consequences for the contemporary ecological and ecumenical culture. In



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our ecumenical century we can consider Stăniloae and Moltmann as two genial theologians that show us in an deep inspirational manner the successful way towards the vivid unity of the Church.

Keywords

Dumitru Stăniloae, Jürgen Moltmann, Holy Trinity, Ecotheology, Perichoresis, Ecumenism

1 Introduction

The world famous Romanian theologian Dumitru Stăniloae has influenced by his theology main issues of contemporary Western theology. In this paper, I would like to underline the role of his work especially in the international promotion of a Trinitarian and ecological theology.

Dumitru Stăniloae participated in many ecumenical dialogues as delegate of the *Romanian Orthodox Church*, for example, at Klingenthal near Straßburg¹, at Heidelberg, at Spindelfhof², at

¹ This conference was dedicated to the dispute on Filioque: see L. Vischer (Hg.), *Geist Gottes – Geist Christi. Ökumenische Überlegungen zur Filioque-Kontroverse*, (Frankfurt am Main: Lembeck Verlag, 1981); see D. Munteanu, *Der tröstende Geist der Liebe. Zu einer ökumenischen Lehre vom Heiligen Geist über die trinitarischen Theologien J. Moltmanns und D. Stăniloaes*, (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2003), p. 162f.

² See D. Stăniloae, *Activitatea Bisericii Ortodoxe Române în întruniri intercreștine. Al IV-lea simposion teologic de la Spindelfhof (Regensburg)*, in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* (henceforth: BOR) nr. 7-8, 1972, pp. 715-720.

Addis Abeba³ the capital city of Ethiopia, at Munich⁴ and at Vienna⁵. As Orthodox theologian, he embraced the Palamite spirituality and transmitted it in the area of the Western thinking. By his contribution to different international conferences, by his lectures in Germany, and especially by his close friendship with Jürgen Moltmann, the doctrine on the Holy Trinity and that on the person and work of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) have become central themes of ecumenical theology. Pneumatology has no longer been treated as a “step child”⁶ of dogmatic theology, and the “forgetfulness about the Holy Spirit” (Geistvergessenheit)⁷ receded into the background, opening the process “of the rediscovery of the Holy Spirit”⁸.

In Germany there are many personalities acknowledged for their Trinitarian theology influenced by Dumitru Stăniloae’s theology, like J. Moltmann, W. Pannenberg, M. Welker.

The touchable influence of Stăniloae’s theology on western Trinitarian and ecological theology involves at the same time a

³ Idem, *Perspectivile dialogului cu Bisericile Vechi Orientale - lucrările Comisiei interortodoxe de la Adis Abeba*, in: BOR nr. 9-10, 1971, pp. 978-991.

⁴ Idem, *The Orthodox-Catholic Theological Discussions. The Document of the Joint Commission in Munich*, in: ROC nr 3, 1982, (42-51), p. 42: “Representing the Romanian Orthodox Church in the works of the Joint Commission were Metropolitan Antonie of Transylvania and Revd Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, who were very active”.

⁵ Idem, *Sesiunea teologică organizată de Fundația “Pro Oriente” din Viena*, in: BOR nr. 11-12, pp. 1155-1157.

⁶ E. Brunner, *Ein Buch von der Kirche*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951), p. 55.

⁷ See O. A. Dilschneider, *Geist als Vollender des Glaubens*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1978), p. 7; idem, *Die Geistvergessenheit der Theologie*, in: ThLZ, Jg. 86, 1961, p. 261.

⁸ B. J. Hilberath, *Pneumatologie*, (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1994), p. 21; see M. Welker, *Gottes Geist. Theologie des Heiligen Geistes*, (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1992), pp. 15-57.

contribution of the Romanian theology to an international ecumenical theology.

During the period of confessionalism, Western theology was oriented towards "the Word" and sometimes "Christomonist". The new interest of Western theology in the person and the work of the Holy Spirit marks an "epochal change in theological thinking"⁹, namely the rediscovery of the living and Trinitarian God. Dumitru Stăniloae has had a substantial contribution to this epochal change, marking the end of "the Trinitarian exile"¹⁰ and actually the rediscovery of Trinitarian theology in the bosom of Protestantism.

Due to the influence of Stăniloae's Trinitarian theology, J. Moltmann has been able to overcome like nobody else "the fundamental Neo-Protestant problem"¹¹, namely that of the lack of a living Trinitarian theology with an authentic pneumatology. Even the theologian Karl Barth stressed before J. Moltmann the pneumatological and Trinitarian deficit of Protestant theology.¹²

⁹ K. Koerrenz, *Pneumatologie*, in: *VuF* 2/1996, p. 46.

¹⁰ See B. Forte, *Trinität als Geschichte. Der lebendige Gott - Gott der Lebendigen*, (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1989), p. 12.

¹¹ See H. J. Goertz, *Geist und Wirklichkeit. Eine Studie zur Pneumatologie Erich Schaeders*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1980), p. 108: „Das neuprotestantische Grundproblem bleibt ein Problem des Heiligen Geistes“; see E. Schaeders, *Das Geistproblem der Theologie. Eine systematische Untersuchung*, Leipzig u. Erlangen: Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1924), p. 10f.

¹² K. Barth, *Kirche in Erneuerung*, in: idem/H. U. v. Balthasar (Hg.), *Einheit und Erneuerung der Kirche. Zwei Vorträge*, (Freiburg/Schweiz: Paulusverlag, 1968), p. 12: „Ich denke, wir alle in allen Konfessionen und Kirchen haben es dringend nötig, auch diese dritte Person (...), den Heiligen Geist, viel ernster zu nehmen, als es in der Regel geschieht“; idem, *Nachwort*, in: *Schleiermacher-Auswahl*, München/Hamburg 1968, p. 311; G. Obst, *Veni Creator Spiritus. Die Bitte um den Heiligen*

Dumitru Stăniloae (1903-1993) deserves special respect¹³ along with main representatives of Orthodox Trinitarian theology of the 20th century, such as S. Bulgakow¹⁴, V. Lossky¹⁵, P. Evdokimov¹⁶, J. D. Zizioulas¹⁷, C. Yannaras¹⁸, O. Clément¹⁹ and N. A. Nissiotis²⁰. By his work and personality, Stăniloae has been considered both “the architect of the Romanian contemporary theology”²¹ and “the greatest Orthodox theologian”²² of our time. John Meyendorff called him “the most

Geist als Einführung in die Theologie Karl Barths, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1988), pp. 16-31.

¹³ See A. Louth, Review Essay: The Orthodox Dogmatic Theology of Dumitru Stăniloae, in: *MoTh2* April 1997, pp. 253-267.

¹⁴ See S. Bulgakov, *Le Paraklet*, (Paris: Aubier, 1944), p. 27f.

¹⁵ See V. Lossky, *Théologie mystique de l’Eglise d’Orient*, (Paris: Aubier, 1944), pp. 131-169.

¹⁶ See P. Evdokimov, *L’Esprit Saint dans la tradition orthodoxe*, (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969), p. 41f, p. 88f; See P. G. Gianazza, *P. Evdokimov cantore dello Spirito Sancto*, (Roma: LAS, 1983), p. 29f.

¹⁷ See J. D. Zizioulas, Die pneumatologische Dimension der Kirche. Internationale katholische Zeitschrift - *Communio* 2/1973, pp. 133-147; Daniel Munteanu, *Was ist der Mensch? Grundlagen und gesellschaftliche Relevanz einer ökumenischen Anthropologie anhand der Theologien von K. Rahner, W. Pannenberg und J. Zizioulas*, (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2010).

¹⁸ See C. Yannaras, Der Heilige Geist als befreiende Kraft. Das patristische Verständnis von der Präsenz und dem Wirken des Heiligen Geistes, in: *Einheit im Geist - Vielfalt in den Kirchen. Bericht der VIII. Vollversammlung der Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen, Genf 1979*, p. 129f.

¹⁹ See O. Clément, *Le Christ terre des vivants. Essais théologique*, (Bégrolles-en-Mauges: Abbayed de Bellefontaine, 1976), p. 66f.

²⁰ See N. A. Nissiotis, *Die Theologie der Ostkirche im ökumenischen Dialog: Kirche und Welt in orthodoxer Sicht*, (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1968), pp. 64-85; idem, *Pneumatologie orthodoxe*, pp. 85-106.

²¹ Ion Bria, *Tratat de teologie dogmatică și ecumenică*, (București: Editura Romania Crestina, 1999), p. 48.

²² O. Clément, Der größte orthodoxe Theologe, in: *Rumänischen Rundschau*, XLVIII Jahrgang, Nr 293-295, p. 149f; idem, Préface, in: D.

influential and creative Romanian theologian of our time".²³ Metropolitan Damaskinos appreciated him as "un des tout premiers théologiens et spirituels (...) du monde chrétien".²⁴ Dumitru Stăniloae is indeed a "dominant personality of Romanian theology since 1930" to this day²⁵, being acknowledged both in Romania and abroad as an authority regarding the synthesis of the Church Fathers' thinking. By his remarkable activity as translator of *Philokalia* and of other patristic writings, he "brought the Orthodox heaven over the Romanian land"²⁶, achieving an authentic "Neo-Patristic synthesis"²⁷ namely a synthesis of Eastern spirituality in general.

Similarly, for Protestant theology, Jürgen Moltmann stands out as a brilliant and world famous theologian²⁸. "He is clearly one of the most influential theological voices in our age."²⁹ He has indeed "more influence worldwide than any other Protestant

Stăniloae, *Prière de Jésus et expérience du Saint-Esprit*, (Paris: Théophanie, 1981), p. 7.

²³ See J. Meyendorff, Foreword, in: D. Stăniloae, *Theology and the church*, (New-York: Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), p. 7.

²⁴ M. Damaskinos, Avant-propos, in: D. Stăniloae, *Le Genie de l'Orthodoxie*, (Paris: Théophanie, 1985), p. 8.

²⁵ Ion Bria, *Tratat de teologie dogmaticăși ecumenică*, p. 48.

²⁶ Mitropolitul Transilvaniei Dr. Antonie Plămădeală, "Generația Stăniloae", in: I. I. Ică jr. (ed.), *Persoanăși comuniune. Prinos de cinstire Părintelui Profesor Academician Dumitru Stăniloae la împlinirea vârstei de 90 de ani*, Sibiu 1993, p. XIV, (XI-XXI).

²⁷ Ion Bria, op. cit., p. 51.

²⁸ F. B. Burnham/C. S. Mc. Coy/ M. D. Meeks, Vorwort in: idem, (ed.), *Love: The Foundation of Hope. The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann and Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel*, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), p. V; B. Mondin, *I teologi della speranza*, (Torino: Borla, 1970), p. 45: „Il fondatore ed espositore più geniale della teologia della speranza è Jürgen Moltmann, un protestante tedesco di Amburg”.

²⁹ F. B. Burnham/C. S. Mc. Coy/ M. D. Meeks, Vorwort, p. V.

dogmatic theologian alive today.”³⁰ His entire theology is marked by a Trinitarian spirituality of Orthodox influence.³¹

Born on 8 April 1926 in Hamburg, Moltmann is a reformed theologian with an authentically Orthodox structure of thinking, thanks to his friendship with Dumitru Stăniloae whom he appreciated as a true Teacher and Father. After a traumatizing war experience - his friend was shot by his side - Moltmann often asks himself: “Why am I still alive?”. He started studying theology as a war prisoner, becoming one of the best-known contemporary Protestant theologians. As an international academic acknowledgment he was granted thirteen titles of *Doctor Honoris Causa*, two of them in Romania, at the Faculty of Theology of Iași and at the Faculty of Theology of Alba-Iulia.

On his 80th anniversary, I had the honour of handing over to him personally at a ceremony of the Faculty of Theology in Tübingen, on behalf of His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, at that time Metropolitan Bishop of Moldova and Bukovina, *The Moldavian Cross*, as a sign of appreciation for his Trinitarian theology of Orthodox influence.

Beyond the remarkable influences of Stăniloae on Moltmann’s thinking, we can signal another document of Christian

³⁰ R. Bauckham, *MOLTMANN Messianic Theology in the Making*, (London: Marshall Pickering, 1987), p. 1; A. Skvorcevic, *Ecclesiologia Escatologico-Messianica di Jürgen Moltmann*, (Roma: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1982), p. 11: speaks about “la fama mondiale di Moltmann e l’attualità delle sue proposte teologiche”; T. Runyon, *Hope for the Church: Moltmann in Dialogue with Practical Theology*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), p. 9: describes Moltmann as a „leading spokesman of a highly influential movement in contemporary religious thought“.

³¹ J. M. Mardones, *Teología e Ideología Confrontación de la Teología Política de la Esperanza de Jürgen Moltmann con la Teoría Crítica de la Escuela de Frankfurt*, (Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto, Mensajero, 1979), p. 254.

ecumenism. It is Professor Moltmann who initiated the translation of an *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology* in German, namely that of Dumitru Stăniloae. By this, he has contributed considerably to the understanding of Orthodoxy in the West, to the building of an ecumenical cultural bridge between Western and Eastern Christianity.

2013, at the international conference of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology and Sciences of Education of the Valahia University of Târgoviște, on the topic: "Church and Society in the Contemporary Times: Challenges, Trends, Perspectives", J. Moltmann underlined the fact that Stăniloae's *Dogmatic Theology* is the best theology book he has ever read. At the end of the conference, His Eminence Archbishop and Metropolitan Bishop Prof. Dr. Nifon handed over to Prof. Moltmann the award *The Wallachian Cross* for his openness to Orthodox theology and spirituality and for his promotion of Orthodoxy in the West.

Thanks to his friendship with Dumitru Stăniloae, Moltmann became an ambassador of Orthodoxy in the heart of Protestantism, being a theologian of the Holy Trinity and at the same time a theologian of the cosmic liturgy. In his theology, he speaks about deification (*theosis*), about Trinitarian perichoresis, about God's uncreated energies, rejecting the addition of *Filioque* as detrimental to Trinitarian theology.

Out of his books of world-wide reputation and success, we can mention: *Theology of Hope* (1964), *The Crucified God* (1972), *The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit* (1975), *God in Creation* (1985), *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (1980), *The Spirit of Life. An Integral Pneumatology* (1991), *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology* (1995), *Ethics of Hope* (2010).

Significant is Moltmann's dedication from his book *In the History of the Triune God*: "To my fatherly friend Dumitru Stăniloae, who has encouraged me to a Trinitarian thinking".

Moltmann writes: “Despite his older age, he (Stăniloae) actively participated in the ecumenical meetings of Klingenthal, during which we endeavoured to solve the problem of the addition of *Filioque* in the teaching on the Holy Trinity (...). Stăniloae convinced me that the addition of *filioque* is useless and detrimental”³².

Dumitru Stăniloae expressed his admiration in his turn towards Moltmann’s theology as follows: “If the theology of my well-known and deeply admired colleague - and I would like to say friend - Jürgen Moltmann is marked by optimism and power of hope, which rely on God’s love up to suffering, then I would like to say that my modest activity can be seen as a theology of love, corresponding to his theology, as it is inspired by the same optimism and by the same strong hope”.³³

2 God’s Ability of Suffering. Trinitarian Spirituality of Communion

Dumitru Stăniloae found in Jürgen Moltmann’s Trinitarian theology³⁴ an authentic expression of certain fully orthodox aspects, however, overlooked by the cultural memory of Orthodoxy. One of these aspects regards the divine merciful

³² J. Moltmann, *Erfahrungen theologischen Denkens. Wege und Formen christlicher Theologie*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999), p. 270.

³³ D. Stăniloae, *Der Dreieinige Gott und die Einheit der Menschheit*, in: *EvTh* 4/1981, p. 150; J. Moltmann, *Gleitwort*, in: D. Stăniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1985), p. 12; idem, *Erfahrungen theologischen Denkens*, p. 269f.

³⁴ See J. Moltmann, *Der gekreuzigte Gott. Das Kreuz Christi als Grund und Kritik christlicher Theologie*, (München: Chr. Kaiser, 5. Aufl. 1987), pp. 255-267; idem, *Trinität und Reich Gottes*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1980).

love, *suffering* together with His creature. The Father suffers together with the Son in the redeeming event of the Cross. Stăniloae characterizes this concept about God, i.e. about a Trinity full of compassion and mercy, as “very impressive”³⁵ and in full agreement with the Orthodox thinking and with a kenotic moment of plenary divine love. “In a way not understood by us, God unites impassibility with His mercy and suffers for us, like Christ, on the cross, in his agony”³⁶. Pain or joy for others is not opposed to God’s impassible character. Thanks to God’s openness for creation, the absolute Trinitarian love is not a vibrating self-sufficient joy but a co-feeling and compassionate love. When man pours out his heart in front of the Creator, “man’s sigh (...) becomes somehow proper to God”.³⁷ Based on this theology of God’s loving suffering for His creature, Stăniloae has been able to state that the heart of the Holy Trinity is “affectiveness”, supreme love and existence in this perfect love³⁸.

The Trinitarian God is for Stăniloae perfect love and communion. This love is, however, capable of suffering. Dumitru Stăniloae speaks about the “suffering love of the Holy Trinity”, the “suffering love of the Son and of the Father for us” as the only power that is able of transforming people and the world³⁹. This concept about Trinity leads to a creative and communitarian spirituality. If God does not refuse the suffering

³⁵ D. Stăniloae, Sinodul II ecumenic și simbolul niceo-constantinopolitan, in: O. nr. 3, 1981, (362-385), p. 377, note 29.

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 379.

³⁷ Idem, Dumnezeu este lumina (I Ioan I, 5), in: O. nr. 1, 1974, p. 76, (70-96).

³⁸ Idem, Ortodoxia în fața unor fenomene actuale din creștinismul apusean, in: O. nr. 2, 1974, (325-345), p. 339.

³⁹ D. Stăniloae, Devotion and Theology in the Orthodox Church, p. 107.

that Love brings with it, all the more man should accept the profound significance of suffering and compassionate love.

In his book, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology* (1995)⁴⁰, Moltmann speaks about collaboration between God and man in the subjective salvation⁴¹, about cosmic liturgy, about transfiguration of the cosmos and deification of the world⁴². Here, he cites without reserve from Dumitru Stăniloae's *Dogmatic Theology*: "The maximal union with God, man's transformation by the fullness of God, without getting lost into it (...) means man's deification"⁴³. Moltmann asserts that Orthodox theology of deification of the cosmos is, by the greatness of its optimism, a necessary correction to Lutheran theology of the cross (KG, 301)⁴⁴.

Thanks to Jürgen Moltmann's brilliant creativity, the global theology has benefited of new paradigms:

- Paradigm of hope: without hope, man and society become meaningless;
- Paradigm of living, merciful God, suffering with us due to His profound and perfect love;
- Paradigm of Trinitarian theology: the Holy Trinity is our social programme, the model of joyful existence and eternal life. This rediscovery of an authentic Trinitarian theology is one of the fruits of his friendship with Dumitru Stăniloae;
- Paradigm of public theology: theology needs to get involved responsibly in the transformation of the society;

⁴⁰ J. Moltmann, *Das Kommen Gottes. Christliche Eschatologie*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995).

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 358.

⁴² Ibidem, p. 299.

⁴³ Ibidem, Footnote 35.

⁴⁴ See D. Munteanu, *Der tröstende Geist der Liebe*, pp. 282-288.

- Paradigm of ecotheology: God is present in creation by the uncreated and deifying energies of the Holy Spirit. J. Moltmann's theology has a pneumatological character and contributes to the rediscovery of pneumatology.⁴⁵ In his teaching on creation, he develops a *cosmic pneumatology*⁴⁶;
- Paradigm of cosmic liturgy and eschatological theology. For Moltmann, as well as for Stăniloae, Christ's resurrection is the central event of Christian faith: "Christianity stands or falls with the reality of Christ's resurrection from the dead"⁴⁷. For this reason, Christian faith is belief in resurrection⁴⁸. The theology of resurrection builds therefore the heart of eschatology. Moltmann's theology of resurrection has an ecumenical significance because it fully converges with the Orthodox theology in general and especially with that of Stăniloae. Moltmann speaks about the cosmic significance of resurrection. By the work of the Holy Spirit is attained the resurrection of the whole creation and "the deification of cosmos"⁴⁹. Moltmann under-

⁴⁵ H. G. Pöhlmann, *Heiliger Geist - Gottesgeist, Zeitgeist oder Weltgeist?*, (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1998), p. 67.

⁴⁶ J. Moltmann, *Gott in der Schöpfung. Ökologische Schöpfungslehre*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1993), p. 26f.

⁴⁷ J. Moltmann, *Theologie der Hoffnung. Untersuchungen zur Begründung und zu den Konsequenzen einer christlichen Eschatologie*, (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1964), p. 150.

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

⁴⁹ J. Moltmann, *Der Weg Jesu Christi. Christologie in messianischen Dimensionen*, (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1989), 276.278; idem, *In der Geschichte des dreieinigen Gottes. Beiträge zur trinitarischen Theologie*, (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1991), p. 190.

stands Christ's resurrection as new life⁵⁰, as transfiguration of the human nature and as new creation by the Holy Spirit. The transfiguring and vivifying energies of the Holy Spirit lead everywhere to resurrection and eternal life⁵¹. The whole cosmos is on its way of becoming a temple of the Holy Spirit⁵². Fully unanimously with Stăniloae, Moltmann considers that the teaching on salvation needs to be correlated with the pneumatological teaching on creation⁵³ namely in the context of a "cosmic spirituality"⁵⁴. Stăniloae speaks in his turn about the vocation not just of man but of the whole cosmos of becoming Church, namely a transparent environment, sanctified and indwelt by God⁵⁵.

Most of the above-mentioned paradigms are of orthodox influence. Jürgen Moltmann himself underlines many times the fact that Dumitru Stăniloae's theology has served and still serves as a source of inspiration for him. He appreciates and admires Dumitru Stăniloae with no reserve, calling him "the master (...) of the Orthodox spirituality"⁵⁶.

⁵⁰ J. Moltmann, *Kirche in der Kraft des Geistes. Ein Beitrag zur messianischen Ekklesiologie*, (München: Chr. Kaiser, ⁵1989), p. 127.

⁵¹ J. Moltmann, *Erfahrungen theologischen Denkens*, p. 139.

⁵² J. Moltmann, *Der Weg Jesu Christi*, p. 299.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 300.

⁵⁴ J. Moltmann, *Gott im Projekt der modernen Welt. Beiträge zur öffentlichen Relevanz der Theologie*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1997), p. 97.

⁵⁵ D. Stăniloae, *Studii catolice recente despre Filioque*, in: *StTeol*, 7-8/1973, pp. 34.17.

⁵⁶ J. Moltmann, *Erfahrungen theologischen Denkens*, p. 269.

3 Ecotheology as Theology of Divine Uncreated Energies

Regarding the *paradigm of ecotheology*, I would like to underline that Moltmann has contributed significantly to a development of an ecological theology by his conception on God's indwelling in creation by the Holy Spirit. He rediscovered God's immanence in the world and accentuated the cosmic character and "the ontological depth" of salvation⁵⁷. For Moltmann, the Holy Spirit is present in the profoundness of material reality, leading the world and man to deification⁵⁸.

In the beginning, Moltmann supported his understanding of God's immanence in creation on the theology of Shekhina. After his contact and dialogue with Stăniloae, he used increasingly a theology of divine, uncreated energies. God is present in the world by His uncreated, vivifying, sanctifying and deifying energies.

As a matter of fact, Dumitru Stăniloae can be considered a *theologian of God's uncreated energies*. By his Trinitarian and Pneumatological theology, he makes a fruitful connection between man's spiritualization and world's transfiguration through participation to divine life of resurrection. Particularly significant for a contemporary ecotheology is both his understanding of the uncreated energies of the Holy Spirit and his conception on matter's dignity as being bearer of divine glory. Both man and cosmos can participate to the life of resurrection. The state of resurrection means for both Stăniloae and Moltmann a maximal transfiguration of matter by the uncreated energies of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ J. Moltmann, *Der gekreuzigte Gott. Das Kreuz Christi als Grund und Kritik christlicher Theologie*, (München: Chr. Kaier, ⁵1987), p. 91.

⁵⁸ Idem, p. 242.

⁵⁹ See D. Stăniloae, *Transparenta bisericii in viata sacramentală*, pp. 506. 508.

Thanks to his teaching on the Holy Trinity, Stăniloae can present in a plausible manner God's energetic immanence in creation. God's living mystery is "present and active in the human life", "not separated from the world", although it "remains for ever inaccessible"⁶⁰. God's energetic immanence has an eschatological dynamics, namely it is oriented towards the transformation of the world in "Kingdom" of God's holiness⁶¹. This perception of God's presence in creation leads to an ecological ethics. Stăniloae shows that the energies of the Holy Spirit make possible both participation to divine communion of the Holy Trinity and deification (theosis)⁶². The Holy Spirit transfigures by his uncreated energies man's bodily existence⁶³.

By Christ's death and resurrection, the dynamics of human nature and of the cosmos received a new direction, namely towards resurrection and eternal life. Stăniloae calls man's and world's restauration by Christ pneumatisation or spiritualisation.⁶⁴ Pneumatisation of human nature and of the

⁶⁰ D. Stăniloae, *Devotion and Theology in the Orthodox Church*, p. 105.

⁶¹ See D. Munteanu, *Die Heilige Dreieinigkeit als heimatlicher Raum unserer ewigen Vollendung*, in: M. Welker, M. Volf (ed.), *Der lebendige Gott als Trinität. Jürgen Moltmann zum 80. Geburtstag*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2006), pp. 257-278; See idem, *Der tröstende Geist der Liebe. Zu einer ökumenischen Lehre vom Heiligen Geist über die trinitarischen Theologien J. Moltmanns und D. Stăniloaes*, (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2003).

⁶² See D. Stăniloae, *Viata si invatatura Sfintului Grigorie Palama*, (Bucuresti: Ed. Scripta, ⁵1993), p. 55; M. J. Le Guillou, *Lumière et charité dans la doctrine palamite de la divinisation*, in: *Ist.* 19/1974, pp. 329-338.

⁶³ D. Stăniloae, *Viata si invatatura Sfintului Grigorie Palama*, pp. 57.59.62.

⁶⁴ D. Stăniloae, *The Orthodox Doctrine of Salvation and its Implication for Christian Diakonia in the World*, in: idem, *Theology and the Church*, p. 199: „From the risen and exalted Christ the Holy Spirit shines forth immediately and superabundantly, exactly as heat radiates from an incandescent body“; idem, *Legătura interioară dintre moartea si învierea Domnului*, in: *StTeol*, 5-6/1956, p. 275f; idem, *Iconomia*

world occurs by the Holy Spirit, Who makes them transparent and receptive to his divine energies. By this process of pneumatisation i.e. of increasingly deeper participation to the communion with God, man becomes a *subject of divine love and of God's uncreated energies*.⁶⁵ The pneumatisation of human nature has cosmic resonances, since man is a microcosmos and a binder (syndesmos) between the world and God. By man's deification the whole world becomes transfigured and infused with divine energies:⁶⁶

“Ceci ne veut pas dire que l'énergie divine est propre seulement à l'Esprit, mais que c'est l'Esprit qui l'introduit dans la créature et lui donne toute son efficacité. L'Esprit reçoit du Père la même énergie incréée que le Fils, mais il n'y a aucune confusion des trois Personnes: l'Esprit reçoit cette énergie à sa manière propre, de même qu'il est le possesseur de l'essence divine à sa manière propre”.⁶⁷

Based on his theology of union between God and creation by means of the divine energies Dumitru Stăniloae emphasizes the relation between the theology of creation and ecclesiology. The whole cosmos is called to become a space of irradiation of the divine light and beauty, namely a transparent space indwelt by God's uncreated energies.⁶⁸

Dumitru Stăniloae develops a theology of creation based on a cosmic pneumatology. The Holy Spirit is the one who leads people and creation on the way to sanctification and to

dumnezeiască temeii al iconomiei bisericești, in: Ort., 1/1969, 14f; idem, *The orthodox conception of tradition*, p. 656.

⁶⁵ D. Stăniloae, *The Orthodox Doctrine of Salvation and its Implication for Christian Diakonia in the World*, p. 288.

⁶⁶ Idem, p. 284f.

⁶⁷ D. Stăniloae, *Le Saint-Esprit dans la théologie et la vie de l'église orthodoxe*, in: *Contacts* 26/1974, p. 229.

⁶⁸ See D. Stăniloae, *Dieu est amour*, (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1980), p. 15f; idem, *Dumnezeu este iubire*, in: Ort., 3/1971, p. 50.

communion with God.⁶⁹ He indwells in people⁷⁰ and makes accessible to them the light of God's eternal love.⁷¹ "The divine fire, with all its infinite power, does not consume the feeble burning bush of the human creature, however strongly and brightly it may burn on his altar".⁷² This intimate communion with God is the aim of creation, called also "eschatological Pentecost": "L'Esprit du Christ ressuscité nous conduit de l'intérieur vers la Pentecôte eschatologique où il jaillira en plénitude du corps transparent du Christ, mais aussi de nos cœurs qui auront progressé en transparence par l'union avec le Christ".⁷³ Eschatological Pentecost means perfection of God's revelation and of God's knowledge through love.⁷⁴ Stăniloae states the cosmic work of the Holy Spirit when he attributes to

⁶⁹ See D. Stăniloae, *Revelația prin acte, cuvinte și imagini*, in: *Ort.*, 3/1968, p. 355f; idem, *The World as Gift and Sacrament of God's Love*, in: *Sobornost* 9/1969, p. 672; idem, *The orthodox conception of tradition and the development of doctrine*, in: *Sobornost* 9/1969, pp. 659. 662: „We all are made spiritual by the Spirit of Christ“; idem, *Le Saint-Esprit*, p. 237; idem, *Invățătura sfintului Atanasie cel Mare despre mîntuire*, in: *StTeol.*, 5-6/1973, pp. 330. 333f; idem, *Die Erlösungslehre des hl. Athanasius des Großen*, in: *Kyrios*, Heft 1-2/1974, p. 26.

⁷⁰ See D. Stăniloae, *Dumnezeu este iubire*, pp. 382. 394; idem, *The cross on the gift of the world*, in: *Sobornost*, 2/1971, 110; idem, *Ortodoxia în fata unor fenomene actuale din creștinismul apusean*, pp. 336, 340-344; idem, *Natură și har în teologia bizantină*, in: *Ort.*, 3/1974, pp. 399, 409, 420.

⁷¹ See D. Stăniloae, *Semnificația luminii dumnezeiești în spiritualitatea și cultul bisericii ortodoxe*, in: *Ort.*, 3-4/1976, pp. 435, 446.

⁷² D. Stăniloae, *Ortodoxie și românism*, (Sibiu: Ed. Arhidiecezania, 1939), p. 45.

⁷³ D. Stăniloae, *Le Saint-Esprit*, pp. 248, 246.

⁷⁴ D. Stăniloae, *Sfîntul Duh și revelația bisericii*, p. 217; idem, *Conceptia ortodoxă despre tradiție și despre dezvoltarea doctrinei*, in: *Ort.*, 1/1975, pp. 9-11; idem, *Crucea și înnoirea creației în învățătura ortodoxă*, in: *MMS* 7-8/1976, p. 476; idem, *Invățătura ortodoxă despre mîntuire și concluziile ce rezultă din ea pentru slujirea creștină în lume*, in: *Ort.*, 2/1972, pp. 199-208.

Him the indwelling of divine energies in creation.⁷⁵ He shows that the Holy Spirit is the One actively intervening in the process of man's spiritualization, necessary to man's dynamic progress "from glory to glory"⁷⁶. Without a continual Pentecost there is no Church, no anticipation of eternal life, and no infinite eternal life in God⁷⁷. Only the Holy Spirit can fill the human existence with divine life, "lifting it to a new level of existence"⁷⁸.

The union between God and world is made perfect in an "eschatological Pentecost", i.e. through the pneumatisation and deification of man and of the cosmos by the Holy Spirit.⁷⁹ It is not just the cosmos that is the gift of God's love, but also the human persons surrounding us: "If the world is a sacrament of God's love, it also needs to be a sacrament of the mutual love among persons, a sacrament of communion"⁸⁰. The entire Cosmos is called to become an environment of divine love, a sacrament of communion. Dumitru Stăniloae never separates the pneumatisation of human existence from the ecclesiological and cosmic dimension of deification.

This fascinating cosmic theology of Dumitru Stăniloae has sensibly marked Moltmann's ecclesiology and cosmic ecotheology, as I will show by referring to Moltmann's perichoretic theology.

⁷⁵ D. Stăniloae, *Sfântul Duh în revelație și în biserică*, pp. 223, 228; idem, *Le Saint-Esprit*, p. 232; idem, *Opinii în legătură cu viitorul sfânt și mare sinod ortodox*, p. 435.

⁷⁶ Idem, *Concepția ortodoxă despre tradiție și despre dezvoltarea doctrinei*, in: *O.*, nr. 1, 1975, (5-14), p. 9.

⁷⁷ Idem, *Caracterul permanent și mobil al tradiției*, p. 153f.

⁷⁸ Idem, *Legătura interioară dintre moartea și învierea Domnului*, p. 286.

⁷⁹ See D. Stăniloae, *Le Saint-Esprit*, pp. 248, 246.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 266.

4 Perichoretic Worldview and Trinitarian Intersubjectivity: the Holy Trinity as “Structure of Supreme Love”

In the following I would like to highlight the main aspects of Dumitru Stăniloae’s Trinitarian theology, and to show the immediate influence of it on Moltmann’s thinking. Especially, I will emphasize that Moltmann takes over the concept of perichoresis and intersubjectivity from Stăniloae and develops it fruitfully in his pneumatological theology of creation.

Stăniloae’s understanding of God as Trinity is based on God’s definition as love. The Holy Trinity reveals itself as “structure of supreme love”⁸¹, because it is a “communion of perfect love”⁸², namely the infinite plenitude of existence.⁸³

Dumitru Stăniloae describes the Holy Trinity as perfect love between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This perfect love not just unites all Trinitarian persons perfectly, without getting them mixed, but also makes them distinct from each other⁸⁴. This means that love unites maximally and at the same time protects persons from getting mixed. Only the Trinity can assure man’s existence as a person⁸⁵. Hence, in communion with God as “mystery of love that never ceases”, the identity of each person will stay preserved⁸⁶. Being an infinite, personal and perfect communion, the Holy Trinity opens to man a perspective of a free, personal, non-mixed participation, in mutual respect and love.⁸⁷

⁸¹ D. Stăniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, p. 256.

⁸² Ibidem, p. 80.

⁸³ D. Stăniloae, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, (Craiova: Mitropolia Olteniei, 1997), pp. 215, 49.

⁸⁴ Ibidem.

⁸⁵ D. Stăniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, pp. 288.161.

⁸⁶ Ibidem, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, pp. 263. 210.

⁸⁷ D. Stăniloae, *Reflexii despre spiritualitatea poporului român*, (Craiova: Ed. Scrisul Romanesc, 1992), p. 127. 161.

Dumitru Stăniloae compares the three divine persons with “three over-shining, over-transparent suns (...) indwelling one another reciprocally and comprehending one another and bearing in themselves and shining in an undivided manner the entire infinite light”⁸⁸. The communion between all divine persons is for him uninterrupted and infinite, so that between them there is nothing that subsists and no empty space that could produce “a gap in the entire divine being”.⁸⁹ For this reason, the difference between hypostases does not annul the continuity (...) of being, and the continuity of being does not get the particularities of the hypostases mixed either”⁹⁰. Dumitru Stăniloae understands this continuity as an expression of the spiritual character of the divine nature⁹¹: “the three divine hypostases indwell one another reciprocally in perfect love and are open to one another and perfectly and continually into one another, because they possess together the whole divine being”⁹².

The first formulation and systematic approach of intersubjectivity can be found in Husserl's philosophy.⁹³ D. Stăniloae very likely took over this concept from Husserl's phenomenology⁹⁴, to deny any passivity in God⁹⁵ and to

⁸⁸ D. Stăniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, pp. 266. 262.

⁸⁹ D. Stăniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, p. 263; see A. Laats, *Doctrines of the Trinity in Eastern and Western Theologies. A Study with Special Reference to K. Barth and V. Lossky*, (Frankfurt am Main, Berlin u.a.: Peter Lang, 1999), p. 106.

⁹⁰ D. Stăniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, p. 263.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 208.

⁹² *Ibidem*, p. 266.

⁹³ See A. Regenbogen, Intersubjektivität, in: H. J. Sandkühler (ed.), *Europäische Enzyklopädie zu Philosophie und Wissenschaften*, Band 2, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1990), p. 710.

⁹⁴ See D. Stăniloae, *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, (Craiova: Ed. Omniscope, ⁵1993), pp. 53, 49: Stăniloae uses here the concept of transsubjectivity. God is the absolute transsubjective reality. He quotes

describe the way in which, in the Holy Trinity, “a self is replaced by another”⁹⁶.

By introducing the concept of intersubjectivity in his teaching on Trinity, Stăniloae takes over the old teaching on perichoresis⁹⁷. Intersubjectivity expresses in his opinion in the most adequate way the mutual indwelling and the spiritual character of the Trinitarian Persons.⁹⁸ The divine being concretely subsists into three divine subjects that mutually indwell each other, because God is an intersubjective communion.⁹⁹ Stăniloae calls this existence of God “threefold intersubjectivity”¹⁰⁰. In their communion, all three pure subjects have nothing from a quality of object because they can indwell one another fully and reciprocally even in their conscience. The conscience of each one of the three divine Subjects contains the conscience of the two other Persons¹⁰¹. The three Subjects bear in themselves the same light, each of them shining from the other two Persons¹⁰².

According to Dumitru Stăniloae, the divine intersubjectivity indicates a conscious and mutual openness, indwelling, transparency, communication and perfect communion of the

the review dedicated to Husserl-research, namely *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, Halle 1929; idem., *Creația ca dar și tainele Bisericii*, p. 21.

⁹⁵ D. Stăniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, p. 272.

⁹⁶ Ibidem, p. 275.

⁹⁷ See D. Stăniloae, *Relațiile treimice și viața bisericii*, in: *Ort.*, 4/1964, (503-525), p. 521.

⁹⁸ See D. Stăniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik* Band 1, 272; idem., *Iisus Hristos lumina lumii și îndumnezeitorul omului*, (București: Ed. Anastasis, 1993), pp. 30, 35, 270; idem., *Iisus Hristos sau restaurarea omului*, pp. 82, 125.

⁹⁹ See D. Stăniloae, *Dumnezeu este Lumina*, p. 70.

¹⁰⁰ D. Stăniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band II, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1990), p. 272.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem.

¹⁰² Ibidem, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, p. 267.

Holy Trinity¹⁰³. He understands the perfect intersubjectivity as a feature of the character of pure subject of the divine Persons, because in the Trinity each subject contains in itself the other subjects¹⁰⁴. However, Dumitru Stăniloae accentuates in this context, that each subject feels the way in which the two other subjects live the divine nature, "not as its own mode, but as theirs"¹⁰⁵.

The originality of Stăniloae's Theology of person and communion consists, in my opinion, in the development of a synonymy between *perichoresis* and *intersubjectivity*.¹⁰⁶ Intersubjectivity supposes not just several subjects but even their perfect interdependent communication, which contributes to the exclusion of any individualism¹⁰⁷. Stăniloae finds perichoresis as well as intersubjectivity on the kenosis of love¹⁰⁸, because, in his opinion, the full transparency and communion of the Trinity depends on kenosis. He translates kenosis as "person's forgetting about himself" in favour of the other persons¹⁰⁹.

This teaching on intersubjectivity keeps of the differences between the divine persons by affirming their way of being

¹⁰³ Ibidem, pp. 266.272.

¹⁰⁴ Ibidem, p. 270f.

¹⁰⁵ Ibidem, p. 273.

¹⁰⁶ See D. Wendebourg, Person und Hypostase. Zur Trinitätslehre in der neueren orthodoxen Theologie, in: J. Rohls, G. Wenz (ed.), *Vernunft des Glaubens. Festschrift für Wolfhart Pannenberg*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1998), p. 508, Anm. 35.

¹⁰⁷ D. Stăniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, p. 276.

¹⁰⁸ See D. Stăniloae, *Dumnezeu este lumina*, p. 95: „Love is chenosis par excellence“; idem., *Prière de Jésus*, p. 23; idem., *Invățătura ortodoxă despre mântuire*, p. 202; idem., *Sfânta Treime sau la început a fost iubirea*, (București: Ed. Anastasis, 1993), p. 6f; idem., *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, p. 214.

¹⁰⁹ Idem., *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, p. 276.

perfectly into one another.¹¹⁰ In this perichoresis, namely mutual embrace, all three divine Persons rest perfectly and eternally¹¹¹. Despite their ontological unity, they remain three Persons in an ontological dialogue or in a dialogical communion, so that “a self is the owner of the content possessed by another self”¹¹². In perichoresis (circuminsessio) as “movement of each self towards the other” respectively as “movement that has as center the other self”, each Trinitarian person sees itself only in relation with the other, towards the other or in the other.¹¹³ One can understand this way that in God there is a huge dynamism of mutual intimacy of three consciousness and mutual, infinite, and interpersonal love.¹¹⁴

5 Jürgen Moltmann’s Theology of Perichoresis

J. Moltmann appropriated the concept of perichoresis officially in his book *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God. Contributions to the Trinitarian Teaching about God*¹¹⁵. By taking over this fundamental concept of the Trinitarian theology, Moltmann will later develop a pneumatological teaching on creation. Moltmann himself confessed that only thanks to his orientation to the social teaching about the Holy Trinity with the

¹¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 275.

¹¹¹ Ibidem.

¹¹² Ibidem.

¹¹³ D. Stăniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, p. 276; idem., *Le Saint Esprit*, 675: „En Dieu, la périchorèse est seulement entre trois. Chaque Personne divine est pleinement satisfaite avec cette périchorèse en trois”; idem., *Sfinta Treime, structura supremei iubiri*, in: *ST*, 5-6/1970, p. 342.

¹¹⁴ See D. Stăniloae, *Dumnezeu este lumina* (1 Ioan 1, 5), p. 75.

¹¹⁵ See my translation of Moltmann’s book, published 2007 in Alba-Iulia at Reîntregirea Publishing House.

“communitarian thinking of the divine perichoresis”¹¹⁶ he was able to overcome the monarchic teaching on Trinity and to develop a pneumatological and perichoretic teaching on creation¹¹⁷.

Moltmann uses the concept of περιχώρησις¹¹⁸ as terminus technicus both in the domain of Trinitarian theology and in that of Christology and of ecological theology on creation. In his Christology, he underlines that perichoresis needs to be understood in sense of a mutual indwelling between the divine and the human nature in Christ, according to the image of the indwelling between fire and iron by which iron becomes incandescent¹¹⁹. In his theology of creation, Moltmann shows that life does not exist without perichoresis with the Spirit of life. In his teaching on Trinity, the concept of perichoresis helps to describe the indwelling and mutual presence of the Trinitarian persons in a dynamic and static sense at the same time. Moltmann translates the noun perichoresis by “rotation”, and the verb *perihoreo* by “encircling, embracing”, as expression of movement of the Trinitarian Persons.¹²⁰

The concept of perichoresis describes a mutual interpenetration and an existence into one another, a mutual indwelling of the Trinitarian Persons¹²¹. This “triadic intersubjectivity”¹²²

¹¹⁶ See J. Moltmann, *In der Geschichte des dreieinigen Gottes*, p. 21, note 46.

¹¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 175

¹¹⁸ See T. de Régnon, *Études de Théologie positive sur la Sainte Trinité*, I, (Paris: Victor Retaux, 1898), pp. 409-427.

¹¹⁹ J. Moltmann, *Erfahrungen theologischen Denkens*, p. 277.

¹²⁰ *Ibidem*; see S. Hartmann, *Trinitätslehre als Sozialkritik?: das Verhältnis von Gotteslehre und Sozialkritik in den trinitätstheologischen Entwürfen von Jürgen Moltmann und Leonardo Boff*, (Frankfurt am Main/Berlin/Bern: Peter Lang, 1997), pp. 115-129.

¹²¹ J. Moltmann, *In der Geschichte des dreieinigen Gottes*, p. 17; *Gott in der Schöpfung*, p. 31.

¹²² *Idem*, *Erfahrungen theologischen Denkens*, p. 278.

is the way we ought to understand God's unity. Moltmann draws attention on the distinction between *circumincessio* and *circuminsessio*, namely between movement and rest, as common dance and internal mutual rest.¹²³ This image of the Trinity as "simultaneous absolute rest and continual whirl"¹²⁴ is compared to "the eye" of a hurricane¹²⁵. Moltmann speaks here about a "circle of the eternal divine life", about an "eternal process of life of the most intensive and perfect empathy"¹²⁶. By this definition Moltmann aims to present the mystery of divine, interior life and love¹²⁷, of eternal communion between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit¹²⁸. Therefore Moltmann understands perichoresis as "communication free of domination" ("herrschaftsfreie Kommunikation"¹²⁹) by which "any subordination in the teaching on Trinity is avoided"¹³⁰. In order to correspond to perichoresis and to exclude any subordination of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Trinity, Moltmann rejects the addition of *Filioque*¹³¹. The teaching on Trinity without *Filioque* protects from any subordinationist conception of the Holy Spirit and respects the relation of reciprocity between the Son and the Spirit¹³².

¹²³ Ibidem; see A. Deneffe, Perichoresis, circumincessio, circuminsessio. Eine terminologische Untersuchung, in: ZkTh 47/1923, pp. 497-532; C. A. Disandro, Historia semantica de perikhoresis, in: SP XV, 1984, pp. 442-447; L. Prestige, Περιχώρεω and περιχώρησις in the Fathers, in: JThS 29/1928, pp. 242-252.

¹²⁴ J. Moltmann, *Gott in der Schöpfung*, p. 30.

¹²⁵ Idem, *Erfahrungen theologischen Denkens*, p. 279.

¹²⁶ Idem, *Trinität und Reich Gottes*, p. 191.

¹²⁷ J. Moltmann, *Gott im Projekt der modernen Welt. Beiträge zur öffentlichen Relevanz der Theologie*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1997), p. 97.

¹²⁸ Idem, *Gott in der Schöpfung*, p. 30.

¹²⁹ Idem, *In der Geschichte des dreieinigen Gottes*, p. 16.

¹³⁰ Idem, *Trinität und Reich Gottes*, p. 192.

¹³¹ Idem, *In der Geschichte des dreieinigen Gottes*, p. 92.

¹³² Ibidem.

Thanks to the concept of perichoresis Moltmann not just understands the unity and equality between Trinitarian persons but also develops an *intersubjective concept of person*. Since every person is “moving” in the other two (circumincessio), the Trinitarian person is “a space inviting to movement” in which the eternal vivacity of the two other persons is developing¹³³. For Moltmann¹³⁴ just as for Stăniloae, person and communion are interdependent. At the same time, the Trinitarian concept of mutual indwelling constitutes the foundation of Moltmann's pneumatological teaching on creation¹³⁵ and on ecclesiology. From the perspective of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Moltmann sees the relation between God and creation as a perichoretic relation, because God infuses, by means of creative and vivifying energies of the Holy Spirit, His entire creation¹³⁶. Creation can be integrated in God's mutual and perichoretic unity, finding in this way its own healing and fulfilment.¹³⁷

Both Moltmann and Stăniloae develop an *intersubjective, perichoretic and ecstatic concept of the trinitarian person*. They see the person of the Holy Spirit in the “social net of intersubjectivity”¹³⁸, namely in relation with the perichoretic communion. For Moltmann, the person of the Holy Spirit is “space of life”¹³⁹, for Father Stăniloae “horizon of life”¹⁴⁰.

¹³³ Idem, *Erfahrungen theologischen Denkens*, p. 279.

¹³⁴ Idem, *Gott in der Schöpfung*, p. 228.

¹³⁵ Ibidem, pp. 31.262.

¹³⁶ Ibidem, p. 262.

¹³⁷ Idem, *In der Geschichte des dreieinigen Gottes*, p. 175; *Trinität und Reich Gottes*, p. 174; *Erfahrungen theologischen Denkens*, p. 282.

¹³⁸ J. Moltmann, *Der Geist des Lebens. Eine ganzheitliche Pneumatologie*, (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1991), p. 27.

¹³⁹ Idem, *Erfahrungen theologischen Denkens*, p. 289.

¹⁴⁰ D. Stăniloae, *Orthodoxe Dogmatik*, Band 1, p. 282.

Due to his Trinitarian theology without *Filioque*, Stăniloae considers Moltmann as the western representative of a teaching on Trinity corresponding in a most accurate manner to the Orthodox tradition.¹⁴¹

Moltmann and Stăniloae promote a *perichoretic conception of the world* and of life, thinking in a Trinitarian manner. God is, in His absolute communion of love, an open interpersonal communion. For this reason, between Him and creation there is a perichoretic relation. The aim of creation is for both Moltmann and Stăniloae “the perichoresis between God and the world”, which involves the indwelling of the divine, sanctifying and deifying energies in creation. Both of these theologians speak about creation as being a “*sacrament of communion*”, a gift of God and a means of dialogue and of union with the Creator. The new creation means for them the supreme *union with God, deification, transfiguration by God's uncreated energies*, participation to divine life and realization of the cosmic liturgy.¹⁴² Both Stăniloae and Moltmann emphasize a paradigmatic change from dominion to communion, as fundamental premise in an attempt of overcoming any ecological crisis.

Their thinking about the Holy Trinity through the prism or category of communion has, as mentioned above, a constructive relevance for our society. Stăniloae understands the fullness of existence as fullness of interpersonal dialogue and

¹⁴¹ See D. Stăniloae, Sinodul II ecumenic și simbolul niceo-constantinopolitan, in: Ort., 3/1981, p. 376.

¹⁴² See Daniel Munteanu, *Der tröstende Geist der Liebe. Zu einer ökumenischen Lehre vom Heiligen Geist über die trinitarischen Theologien J. Moltmanns und D. Stăniloaes*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2003; idem, *Theologie der Koinonia. Ökumenische Einführung in die Orthodoxe Theologie und Spiritualität*, (Borsdorf: Edition Winterwork, 2013).

communion¹⁴³. One can see the Trinitarian communion as a source of orientation for an authentic Christian life. Openness to God's love means transparency for the sense of existence. Stăniloae does not separate God's openness and Trinitarian communion from the character of sacrifice. Just as in the Holy Trinity a person makes room for the other two and constitutes at the same time a space of accomplishment of the other Trinitarian persons, similarly man ought to assume kenosis, i.e. to be sensitive and ready for sacrifice. A human life inspired by the light of the Holy Trinity is marked by a deep sensitivity¹⁴⁴. Christians understand their freedom as kenotic love and their kenotic love as freedom in the communion with the Holy Trinity.

5 Conclusions

Finally, we can describe the positive influence of Dumitru Stăniloae's theology on Jürgen Moltmann's ecological and Trinitarian theology as a success of the ecumenical dialogue. If faith remains, as Stăniloae affirmed, "always open to new progress in understanding"¹⁴⁵, then the fundamental calling of theology is to remain open to the ecumenical dialogue, i. e. able to receive new forms of exegesis and formulation of Christian truth, even if they seem at the first sight contradictory and not reconcilable with one's own thinking. Theological truth is a living truth only when it doesn't become an idol and remains capable of reflecting divine light always superior to the human

¹⁴³ D. Stăniloae, *Modurile prezenței lui Hristos în cultul bisericii*, MB, 7-9/1982, p. 438ff.

¹⁴⁴ *Idem*, p. 454f.

¹⁴⁵ *Idem*, *Ortodoxia în fața unor fenomene actuale din creștinismul apusean*, p. 328.

intellect. This consistent intrinsic overcoming signify an enhancement of indwelling communion with God, the only appropriate way to increase in the knowledge of God¹⁴⁶.

Each successful attempt to understand God involves openness to the divine presence in the world. Each *human being is God's divine image* (imago Dei, imago trinitatis)¹⁴⁷ and as such a historical presence of God in the world. The other person is the chance of being set free from "the prison of one's own (...) subjectivity"¹⁴⁸.

By way of conclusion we can describe the fruitful and ecumenical friendship between Stăniloae and Moltmann, the two geniuses of contemporary Christianity, as a successful overcoming of confessional subjectivity through the common passion for making God's presence in the world more and more visible.

¹⁴⁶ Idem, Sobornicitate deschisă, pp. 179-180.

¹⁴⁷ Idem, L'homme, image de Dieu dans le monde, in: Contacts nr. 25, 1973, pp. 287-309; idem, *Trăirea lui Dumnezeu în ortodoxie*, (Cluj-Napoca: Ed. Dacia, 1993), pp. 191-232.

¹⁴⁸ Idem, Chipul lui Dumnezeu și responsabilitatea lui în lume, in: O. nr. 3, 1973, p. 350.