

FLOREA LUCACI

LOGICAL THINKING AND SPIRITUAL PROJECTIONS IN
IOAN BIRIȘ'S PHILOSOPHY

Florea Lucaci

West University of Timisoara, Timisoara, Romania.

Email: florea_lucaci@yahoo.com

Abstract: The present study proposes a valorization of the work of professor and philosopher Ioan Biriș. The statistics of his books and studies, their distribution by areas of interest, and especially the ideas in his work confirm the need for philosophy in the Romanian cultural life. As a whole, his philosophical endeavor is based on the concept of totality. Thus in the Hegelian spirit, Ioan Biriș successfully convinces us that the logical may exceed the limits of formal exercise and become the organon of philosophy. In this capacity, the logical may operate on the real and valorize the multiple relationships between identity and difference. His books *Filosofia și logica științelor sociale*, *Totalitate, sistem, holon*, *Rolul imaginărilor în cunoașterea științifică*, *Istorie și cultură*, as well as a series of studies among which let me mention: "L'identité symbolique et la logique partitive des valeurs spirituelles", "On the logic of religious terms", "Le rapport identité-différence et la conjonction collective. Aspects logiques", clearly prove the author's capacity to integrate existential, religious, cognitive and axiological issues into a unitary vision. As Noica would say, he succeeded to enter the spirit's life thorough the intellect's gate.

Key words: analytic philosophy, applied logic, totality, identity, difference, science concepts, spiritual values, religious terms, Ioan Biriș

In professor Ioan Biriş's case, an initial list of achievements, occasioned by the anniversary of a beautiful age, involves using the Augustinian concept of *the present in the past*. The concept denotes the way professor Biriş's thinking is alive and creative, and also how he gives himself spiritually to his friends and to his collaborators. To him, the connection between reason and moral law has always been the base for his relationship with his undergrads as well as with the Master and PhD students. Under his guidance, many generations loved philosophy, learnt the science of rationale and the value of truth. We may say that in his identity we find life principles that ancient philosophers provided in the famous definitions of philosophy.

Ioan Biriş may be defined and recognized by his ideas that nourish books, studies and his entire scientific activity. His presence may be identified in a few areas of interest, namely in analytical philosophy, ontology, philosophy of science, philosophy of religion, and applied logic. If we look at numbers, we note that he is the author of 12 books, 150 studies and conference papers, he participated in world philosophy congresses in Boston (1998), Istanbul (2003), Seul (2008), Athens (2013), in five congresses organized by *l'Association des Sociétés de Philosophie de Langue Française*, in 59 national and international scientific symposia, he was associate professor at the University of Padova, he received seven awards and important distinctions, etc. His CV has the data of an active philosopher, with significant contributions to the clarification of theoretical issues in the philosophy of science, of social science, in ontology and the philosophy of religion.

Obviously, a simple numeric calculation of his activity is not sufficient. To know Ioan Biriş better, to know his way of thinking and how he reconstructs conceptually the existential areas constituting this world, we have to follow the thematic of a few ideas. Related to this subject, we note his respect for the good philosophical tradition, as well as his concern with renewing discourse and with new solutions in the current context. In this sense, to him, at the base of reconstruction lies an essential concept, that of *totality*, a concept integrated in all his books and studies. The presence of this concept is tied to his belief in the legitimacy of „philosophical vocation” as a cognition instrument by which we understand „the great secrets of existence” (Biriş 2007, 4).

Actually, the concept itself, as a nucleus of any theory, was a topic for research in two of the most recent books by Ioan Biriş. In *Conceptele științei* he seeks to clarify the very idea of concept, proposing „potential typologies of scientific concepts” (Biriş 2010, 10). In another book, *Filosofia și logica științelor sociale*, he presents an original solution, respectively, having established the major issues and „a typology of socio-cultural integrations,” he links them with one of the adequate forms of „partitive logic.” It is about meleologic, holologic and holomeric logics. Finally, developing Noica's theory, he submits that „partitive logic under holomeric

form is the most adequate to explain spiritual and social life.” (Biriș 2014, 13).

Even these brief references indicate the goals pursued by Ioan Biriș. He did not choose the pleasant literary genre of essays, but a hard, truly philosophical way. Thus, he positions himself in terms of an order of the logical, which is typical of analytic philosophy. „Either you start from concept, or you end with it. Modernity has this sole justification, that it ends with the concept” (Noica 1991, 206). Clear delineation of a theory based on a well defined concept is an authentic way to legitimize the philosophical discourse genesis. On this subject of synthesizing the reality of facts in a concept wrote John Stuart Mill (Mill 1930, 194). Therefore, in an empiricist view, under rigorous logic control, a gradual abstractization process starts for a unitary integrating vision.

1. *Totality* and philosopher's vocation

Since his youth, that is since his first studies on Hegel, Ioan Biriș was engaged in a complex research on the way philosophy approaches major existential issues, from nature to culture and spiritual life. Retrospectively, we may state that his endeavor has been successful as regards the logical models he proposes to understand existence, especially the social one. Consequently, we believe that any learned reader may find logical thinking applied in a certain form in Ioan Biriș's philosophy. In the context of his work, the phrase *a certain form* concerns conceptual constructions related to the idea of *totality*. It is about a category that similarly to Plato's Idea, has a foundational function. From his doctoral research finalized in the volume *Totalitate, sistem, holon* to *Filosofia și logica științelor sociale* and *Philosophy in the Age of Applied Logic*, we note his interest in perfecting a certain type of operational logic at the level of cultural systems, including religious life.

A supporter of analytic philosophy, Ioan Biriș belongs to a movement of ideas that seeks a new legitimacy to philosophy, in the context of a dialogue with positivist sciences. His effort visible in his books and studies, like that of thinkers who systematically called on the logic derived from Gottlob Frege's thought, constitutes a valid argument that eliminates any discussion on the death of philosophy. By use of applied logic, new solutions have been found in ontology and gnoseology, to the problems of rationality or in sensitive fields of language, culture and religion. In other words, although in Ioan Biriș's work, references to Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Hegel etc. are substantial, still he is a current philosopher. Philosophy recoups from antiquity to nowadays are perceived as solutions to various crises, an aspect present in the idea of totality analysis. An overview of philosophy's historical evolution is summed up by Ilie Pârvu in a three stage configuration:

(i) *the metaphysic-ontologic stage* (Aristotelian model), when „categories derived from the study of existence and were proposed as its generic features, its essential determinations”;

(ii) *the epistemologic-transcendental stage* (Kantian model), in which each category represented „the base or condition for the possibility of an intellectual synthesis type involved in knowing experience objects”;

(iii) *the logic-linguistic* (analytic philosophy model), characterized by the attempt to „derive category system architecture from linguistic frame research present in any rational cut-out of existence” (Pârvu 1990, 35-36).

Going back to the concept of *totality*, let us follow how it functions as an integrating rational model. The concept built is historical, in the sense that throughout centuries a number of great philosophers sought to solve identity aporia noticed by ancient Greeks. Well, Ioan Biriș focuses on this effort that resulted in the „Spinoza model named «origin identity»; the Cartesian model of the «juxtaposed form»; the Kantian one of the «exclusive form» and the «synthesized integrating» one proposed by Hegel”. At the same time, he also discovers „a tradition in line of the Romantics and Christian philosophy”, so that one may speak even about a „philosophy of totality.” Certainly, the process also continues in the 20th century, a period in which „the idea of totality will be equally used by philosophy and scientific knowledge” (Biriș 2007, 4). In Ioan Biriș's view, the historic recovery exercise is aimed at constituting a referential for his contribution, namely a sketch of a logic of totalities that should legitimize a theory of the totality idea. In his latest studies, respectively in *Noua logică și teoriile științifice, L'identité symbolique et la logique partitive des valeurs spirituelles, The Moral Values and Partitive Logic, Trei forme de logică partitivă*, Ioan Biriș designs a logic of totalities that supports the integrating rational models operation in the social, cultural and religious life. We mention that he presented the totalities logic project at the World Philosophy Congress in Athens, as well as during other scientific events.

The Spinoza model of „origin identity” had the ambition to surpass Cartesian rationalism aporia but went against social structure evolution tendencies. Instead, the „additive model” of Descartes would be better justified in connection with „liberalism and the democratization effort of social-political life” (Biriș 2007, 17). Both models, through their internal logic, have limited function, namely they do not correspond adequately to the political-social structures. With Immanuel Kant, the model of „the exclusive form” is imposed, which resulted as a solution to antinomies problem. In this case, generalization is paradoxical, because „placing a reality between brackets means at the same time generalizing another.” The opposite left from disjunction „is dedicated to valorizing, causing hierarchies” (Biriș 2007, 22-23). Therefore, neither does this model satisfy the understanding of the totality idea and of the related logic.

From Ioan Biriș's analysis it clearly results that only with Hegel we can talk about an integrating rational model, a model supported by a dia-

lectical logic of relations. With this statement, backed by arguments, he is closer to the philosophers who see in the Hegelian system a perfection of philosophy along the lines opened by Aristotle's question *ti esti*. Philosophy is seen as a system, „a vast epic of the spirit, «an experience», as Hegel himself says; in the effort to know itself, the spirit produces successively all the forms of the real, first of all the frames of its own thinking, then nature and history, so that it is impossible to understand any of these forms in isolation, but rather in their evolution or development” (Bréhiér 1932, 738-739). Therefore, the Hegelian philosophy as a system includes all, both nature and the human world, as well as transcendence. Jean Beaufret also tackles this aspect in synthesized, almost aphoristic formulae. Thus, he reflects on this system in two of his works, namely that *Fenomenologia spiritului* is God's theology „at our home” (*bei uns*), in other words, it belongs to the man in whom lives God, while *Știința logicii* is God's theology „at his home”, meaning „before nature and finite spirits were created”, that is God's theology without man (Beaufret 1999, 167).

With Hegel's philosophy „we are at once in the order of essence, meaning in the hardest and also most important part of logic, because this is where we see intermediates' play and totalities' built” (Biriș 2007, 24). The dialectical interplay alluded to by Ioan Biriș occurs in the relationship between identity and difference, shaping the real at all existence levels. Consequently, the history of the world and of man, including of philosophy as identification of thought with reality is „the true way in which truth exists” namely „its scientific system”(Hegel 1965, 11). This system is possible because it has a logical foundation. Dialectical logic, whose object is to solve contradictions, supposed in the becoming process by the concept of totality, „extends to the dimensions of an ontology, of a general philosophy”(Botezatu 1983, 87).

I remember well that in about 1981 Ioan Biriș focused his research on the Hegelian philosophy, on the topic of totality. Then his contribution was a surprise to some, respectively, he demonstrated that identity and difference are conceived by Hegel as a synthesis of relations. Therefore, the universal relations, not the universal traits constitute the base of subject and object unity. As he insisted in a study -- *Totalitatea ca adevăr al identității și diferenței în filosofia lui Hegel*, Revista de filosofie nr. 3. 1981 – identity is an „onto-logical universal”, accounting for the becoming of being and of thought. So, one may state that identity and difference have an existential function. The same idea is emphasized by Petre Botezatu: „It seems paradoxical, but the identity principle does not refer to the simple identity relation between objects or notions, it speaks profoundly about *substance persistence, essence of things*, beyond accidental vicissitudes” (Botezatu 1997, 28). The Hegelian identity is a becoming dialectical unity, a totality that involves also the philosopher who meditates on world totality. The ultimate reality is to be found in rational thought. The dialectical

logic discloses how being is constituted in essence, and the essence in concept, and this way is correlated with its reflection, which is the foundation of reality.

Compared to models pertaining to the views of Spinoza, Descartes or Kant, in Hegel's case – Ioan Biriș submits – totality has „germinating powers”, its truth being manifested in a synthesized-creative way. „Totality as truth of identity and difference is itself the formal structure of the logical in Hegelian thinking, and its operating mechanism continues to be whether it is about logic or about the philosophy of nature or of the spirit” (Biriș 2007, 31-32). Looking particularly at the meaning of the phrase „germinating powers”, the Hegelian concept of totality also includes the spiritual projection of world creation. In this respect, Peter Singers says: „Since the spirit shapes the world, the rational thinking study will disclose the principles based on which the world took shape. In Hegel's style, to understand God's eternal essence before world creation means to understand the foundation of world creation” (Singer 1996, 130-131).

Considering the Hegelian model, Ioan Biriș achieves a series of tests, respectively he checks the way in which the idea of totality leads to our understanding of man as a socio-cultural being. It is not difficult to conclude that history cannot be without philosophy. Then we understand history crises as moments of becoming, of the rapport between the sense projected in goals and ideals and the experience lived by man. Ioan Biriș's clarifications on the idea of totality involves the philosophical conscience perspective, as Lucian Blaga defined it, which is a „product of man's supreme care” of his own historical destiny (Blaga 1983, 190).

The Hegelian model implies, as a moment of totality, the anthropological matter as well as that of man as a social being. Man, both individually and socially, appears as a system in which parts' relationship with the whole needs integration. If we take this aspect into account, „human condition must be taken as a «total subject»”. Sociological research fully justifies the operational model, which is proven by Marcel Mauss's coined notion of „total social phenomenon” (Biriș 2007, 36-37). In psychology too, to explain reality, rational integrating models have been used. „the central idea of gestaltist structuralism is that of totality”(Piaget 1973, 63). In connection to psychology research, Biriș notes the interest in a scientific approach of totality. Similarly, the model is tested in linguistics research. In this field too, „the true object of study will be the integrating «form», the totality-form, not its composing elements.” He argues the idea by valorizing N. Chomsky's views, whose grammar describes „the generating character of linguistic totality” (Biriș 2007, 44-45). In the philosophy of history, based on the research of the mechanism of facts and events integration, the concept of totality was imposed. Among those who promoted „the new history” let us mention Lucien Febvre, Marc Bloch and Fernand Braudel.

Finally, the philosophical vocation of the idea of totality is tested, respectively its vocation of a conceptual construction instrument. Therefore, having analyzed a series of ontological aspects, the author turns to clarifications in logical terms. What does he find? First of all, certain ambiguities on the concept of structure and related types as well as types of integration had to be eliminated. Also, he clarifies the logical properties of the whole-part connection, and the distinction between collective and distributive concepts. In his analysis, he proposes a table of collective notions and the types of collective conjunctions.

The analysis and technical aspects of the logical reconstruction of the idea of totality led to the limits of thought. Consequently, Ioan Biriş invites debate on the very issue of logical thinking principles. One finds that identity and non-contradiction beyond the strictly logical framework, namely applications in ontology, may generate confusions. Likewise is with logical operators, especially with negation. It would be interesting to return to the ways Plato and Aristotle thought about the distinction between distributive and collective notions. Ioan Biriş shows that only the inference plan thought by Plato for collective conjunctions is operational from a holistic perspective (Biriş 2007, 200-204).

Is a return to dialectics possible? The answer is yes, as result of subtle analyses and interpretations in Karl Popper's criticism of Hegel's dialectics, as well as based on Plato's and Kant's contributions. Biriş submits that recovering Hegelian logic as a dialectics of categories, that is „a *organon*, a productive logic and a logic of «the non-isolatable»” a response on the limits of thought may be provided, which „is in the very idea of totality.” (Biriş 2007, 208-211). And, with such dialectical logic in which „the live concept fire should be lit again”(Hegel 1966, 571) one cannot ignore content, human real existence, and human cultural and spiritual-religious manifestations.

2. Idea of *totality* and the logic – religion relation

In philosophical views, the concept of culture is defined as „the *socialising* function that achieves social organization” and „the productive, operational function expressing the typically human note – creativity.” Cultural creativity involves both identity and diversity elements, in connection with temporal-historical and spatial-geographical coordinates. Certain consequences result, as regards cultures definition. „The philosophical effort to find the creative process unity is naturally connected to a logic of the concept of culture, to sphere and content relations with other concepts” (Biriş 2000, 15). It is worth's mentioning that Ioan Biriş defined *creativity* as a unique criterion in cultures classification, eliminating ideological or geographical ambiguities.

In this wonderful intellectual adventure amongst Ioan Biriș's books and studies, we turn now to the logic-religion relation in connection with the idea of totality. For argumentation, let us remember that religion is in all historical cultures and influences their orientation and becoming. Also, creation joined the flow of ideas by means of Christianity. In ancient Greece, the term of creation did not exist, and the Romans used it to mean parent or founder. „A fundamental change occurred in the Christian era: creation had been reserved only to divine acts...” (Tatarkiewicz 1981, 351). If God is a creator, biblical statements have certain features. On the meanings of the biblical word, Jean Landrière stated: „Christ's word ensures faith a performative and causal character, but the performative and causal effectiveness of the word depends on man's response, a correlative performative response” (Landrière 1970, 117). Actually, about this spoke 1600 years ago St. Gregory of Nyssa, saying it is in the nature of things „by learning we should know the true beauty of the meaning hidden in it, [the Bible, our note] and shape ourselves according to its appearance” according to the divine image in the word. (Sf. Grigorie de Nyssa 1999, 67)

To Ioan Biriș, the analogy is an essential logic between the functions of religious language. Relatedly, the analogy is based on the feature of transitivity, namely on the transfer of the feature from one entity to another. We mention at the same time that according to the features of the compared entities, the conclusion is a problematic sentence, which is generated sometimes by the impossibility to verify truth. Therefore, it is natural to rely on analogous structures, which justifies logical shaping of the image of man-God relationship, in the religious faith. This aspect may even be focused on a dogma. „As a rule, when our faiths generate consistently prescriptive norms, formulas become imperious.” (Biriș 2009). In *On the Logic of Religious Terms*, Biriș talks about a logic of faiths, focusing on specifics of religious terms. To get to dogmatic concepts, he tackles first aspects of analogy, distinctions between specific, general and total contents of terms, between logic conjunctions and other aspects pertaining to the idea of totality. Also in this context, he emphasizes an inferential process that validates faith formulas from other faiths. This way, he showcases the universality of certain religious faiths, deriving from the specifics of logic's laws. In the context of demonstrations, certain ideas proposed by Harry J. Gensler and Jaakko Hintikka are valorized in an excellent way.

Obviously, in the same study, Ioan Biriș could not ignore the possibility to valorize the philosophy of language, considering that „religious experience is not pure subjectivity as it may become objective by language. In other words, we may get through language to the facts of faith.” (Biriș 2009). References to Wittgenstein, Jean Landrière, John Langshaw Austin, Donald D. Evans and others are a starting point in approaching potential logical relations between performative statements. The aim is „to descend to the level of analogically connected concepts, to

religious terms.” It is especially about concepts analogically connected and their features. Ioan Biriş deems important „the concepts that have «signification in excess», because features are transferred between contrary existences.” For example, we have „features that are transferred from «man» to «God» and vice-versa”. In this case, „the content of terms is given by the totality of features”, and analogy constitutes the base for „an integrating composition, a unification” (Biriş 2009).

Therefore, by original interpretations, fine distinctions and a sublet game of pros and cons, Ioan Biriş reaches the fundamental reference which is the idea of totality. In this perspective, interesting is the analysis on concepts’ content denoting the divine being. In this case, the *law of the inverse proportion between the sphere and the content of the notion* is not applicable, a conclusion reached by Ion Petrovici, and a few years later also by Edmond Goblot. Consequently, only „in this limited formula (let us mention it is about notions in *the same series*), one may speak about an inverse proportion between the sphere and the content of a notion”. It would be simply dangerous to rational thinking „not to take into account those special conditions and to declare *the inverse proportion* an absolute truth valid in any circumstance”(Petrovici 1998, 107).

To determine the sphere and content of concepts denoting divine beings, like God, Logos, Holy Trinity, as Gheoghe Enescu suggests relying on two notions, namely *real sphere* and *known sphere* or *real content* and *known content* (Enescu 1985, 329-330). God-in-itself being transcendent is incognoscible so that the elements *in the real sphere* and the notes in the *real content* on the concept of God, cannot be determined, not even by approximation. *The known sphere* or *the known content* are drawn from theophanies and cratophanies described in the Bible, from prophets’ revelations or from Christ’s work as *Logos made flesh*. It results that the idea of God is given by the self-referential definition in the word of the Bible and by determinations associated contextually. For example, we may say that *the known sphere* of the concept of God includes a series of notions determining contextual theophanic states as for instance: *pillar of fire, voice from the sky, tongues of fire, Logos made flesh*, etc. or cratophanic: *plagues of Egypt*. As regards the notes in *the known content*, we remember: holiness, kindness, creativity, omnipresence, omniscience, etc. Examining the divine presence in the human world through His own utterance, in the biblical text, Ioan Chirilă concludes: „Turned into word, the Name of God is transformed into a component of that which is the divine language, being the verb by which God introduces Himself, is manifested and communicates with His creation” (Chirilă 2003, 91). If this understanding of God’s name or descriptions is adequate, namely it aims for a real reference, divine revelations are both forms of the knowledge of Him as well as existential modes of His presence in the world.

In connection with the idea of totality, from the point of view of the Christian philosopher, one may state that God is manifested in

ontophanies, in the concept of God and in the linguistic expression of faith, namely:

„a) Divine entities *in re*: God *sub-xists* as an enipostatic utterance, respectively the word of God is the secret foundation of the created world.

God *sub-xists* camouflaged in the mystical meaning of theophanies, even if only as perceived to *sub-xist*, therefore manifesting in their material appearance, respectively pillar of fire, the voice heard by Moses, the plague affecting Egypt, the pillar of cloud, the fire tongues, etc.

b) Divine entities *in mente*: God's *Being* is the *Holy Trinity dogma*– as articulated by Athanasius the Great, or it is „the being of which nothing greater may be conceived”– according to a description by Anselm of Canterbury, or it is „the Perfect Being”– as an idea by Descartes in „Discourse on method” etc.

c) Divine entities *in voce*: God is manifested, meaning it *ex-ists* in the biblical text, mystics' language, in the liturgical service, in icons as an expression of visual language, in prayers, etc. However, if God *ex-ists* in language, the *language being* is a hypostasis of the divine being. Or, as the evangelist says: „the word was with God and God was the Word” (Lucaci 2008, 197).

All the aspects highlighted above fully justify Ioan Biriș's effort to formalize Blaga's recommendation in *Eonul Dogmatic*, which is to propose that logic become „a science of notions as totalities” (Biriș 2009).

Under authority of the idea of totality, the concept becomes a logical and ontological operator. Thus, in human view, in view of the human history marked by metaphysical and spiritual projections, Hegel's dialectics identifies the logical operator in the *subject-concept* whose movement is the very foundation of the world in its totality. To be clearer, the concept has a subject nature, and its determination derive from understanding the world as totality. In this respect, Radu Stoichiță states that „if the subject lacked the possibility to manifest and achieve itself objectively (= subject-objectivity), and therefore existence attribute, consequently it would also lack the possibility to further achieve its own recognition in and through the object (through concept-objectivity), meaning that being deprived of the possibility to manifest itself objectively, it would lack the very possibility to ever be aware of itself”(Stoichiță 1972, 34-35).

In its evolution, the subject-concept externalizes in nature, then negates this dialectical moment returns to itself so as to create various cultural forms, namely the art, religion, philosophy. Thus, in Hegel's logic, negation as a dialectical operator is the form of creative manifestation by which the real comes into being. By this thinking, „dialectical negation is existential, it operates in things, marking the death process as well as the birth process, it has a demiurgical function” (Botezatu 1973). Therefore, considering these ontology and logic elements, Ioan Biriș sees in becoming and in the moments of world's unity, a creative totality, envisaging

innovating cultural models. In this sense, he eliminates empirical geographic, historical periods, ideological and religious criteria and introduces the *creativity principle*, which conveys logical and ontological coherence to cultural types. Thus, we have: (i). cultures of predominantly conservative creativity; (ii). cultures of axio-traditional creativity; (iii). cultures of polycentric creativity and (iv). cultures of pragmatic rationalizing creativity.

(i) *Thought and religion in predominantly conservative creativity cultures.* Pertaining to this model are the archaic and North-American Indian cultures. As regards the archaic cultures, there is archeological evidence of religious practices as far as the middle Paleolithic period. People's thinking then, their myths had to be understood „in that context of the views on the world, of the ethos in life”(Biriş 1996, 85). Certainly, their rapport with the world „was done through religious and magical structures”, definitely not through „creative finalities focused on pragmatism and rationalization.” (Biriş 1996, 96). Under these terms, stagnation, respectively conserving socio-cultural practices, becomes a way of living and surviving. Traditions and cutumas have the authority of the law. For a better understanding of this cultural model, Ioan Biriş uses the modern logic of the time. According to his calculations, the present implies both the past and the future, reducing them to a permanent temporal state. Actually, in archaic mentality, only the present being is important, as indicated by the infrequency of exchatologies (Biriş 1996, 100).

(ii) *Thought and religion in axio-traditional creativity cultures.* The Indian and Chinese cultures exemplify the best this type. Following only the thought-religion rapport, we note that through Arians a superior culture was imposed in India through the teachings of the Vedas, then the spiritual life diversified through Buddhism and Jainism. „As regards the scientific Endeavour, this is largely affected by religious and philosophical views.” However, astronomy and „mathematical speculation” as well as „medicine based on a specific metaphysics of the human body data (also deemed to be the same as those of the Universe) and the energies animating it” (Biriş 1996, 103). In ancient China, initially „people's religious beliefs were based on the ancestors' cult.” Later on, these conditions with be deeply „touched” by „ethical and philosophical processing”. At the peak of Chinese culture and civilization, „traditional thinking trends, especially Taoism and Confucianism will be revigorated” (Biriş 1996, 104-105). A pragmatic people, the Chinese excel in inventions and some theoretical and practical knowledge.

In both cultures, one notes faithfulness to origins. Consequently, „the special importance of the Vedic texts to the entire Indian spirituality”, out of which culture's fundamental notions are asserted: *brahman*, *atman*, *dharma*, *karma*, *yoga* etc. (Biriş 1996, 107-108). „In the Chinese culture too, tradition is based on a few sacred writings whose content is deemed

doubtless: a) Documents' book; b) Changes (mutations)' book; c) Poetry book; d) Ceremonies book; e) seasons' Book" (Biriş 1996, 111). Among the mythological-philosophical concepts, that provide order in the world, is *dharma* to Indians and *tao* to the Chinese.

The explanatory model designed by Biriş has the merit to showcase cognitive structures versus logical ones. As part of knowledge, one distinguishes „reasoning based on the sign (*anumāna*) and identification by analogy (*upamāna*)". The reasoning based on the sign targets the principle of sufficient reason. As logical operators, Biriş examines conjunction and inclusive disjunction, able to internalize paradoxical aspects (Biriş 1996, 118-119). To the Chinese, the role of thought is not to look for truth, but rather to cause practical effects, identifiable in human behavior (Biriş 1996, 120-121).

(iii) *Thought and religion in polycentric creativity cultures*. In this type of cultures, predominant are freedom of creation and curiosity to explore new directions in science, philosophy, art and technical field. Geographically, they are spread from West India to the Atlantic. Among them, prominent for their creative spirit, influence and historical duration, are the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Persian, Hebrew, Greek and Roman cultures.

Certainly, given the limits of the current study, we cannot tackle each culture separately, but rather look for a few typical aspects. In Egyptian culture, religion had a dominant role, determining the typology of artistic, architectural and cultural manifestations generally. To sum it up, we may say that the Mesopotamian culture is the place of important technical inventions, of discoveries in medicine, mathematics, astronomy. Here too, religion is dominant (Biriş 1996, 136-137). The Mesopotamian culture imposed through literary creations and mythology the hero cult, founder of an existential space, city, country, whose archetype is Gilgamesh. „During his ordeal. the hero defeats monsters, sets the position of mountains and rivers, names creatures, consequently he transforms the universe into a symbolically regulated image, to be appropriated and controlled by man"(Gourhan 1983, 140). Therefore, the hero imposes a certain order which in the Persian culture shall become the sacred order focused on the royal institution. In this culture, order is hierarchical. „Spiritually, the Persian culture stands out through its religion named Zoroastrism or mazdeism", made up of several dualist systems, namely „a cosmologic, ethical and religious dualism", respectively. There is also a Savior myth here and an optimistic eschatology. In its essence, Persian thought is animated by „the imperative of *imitatio dei*", which stimulates creativity. (Biriş 1996, 140-141).

The ancient Jews give the bible to the universal culture, and in connection with this sacred text is the New Testament, foundation of Christianity. Avraam is the one to whom, according to tradition, God was revealed as One, setting the base for monotheist religion, a religion of the

Book. God, respectively Yahwe, creates the world through language, articulating a series of imperative sentences. Between Him and man, complex relationships were built, so that, in addition to the sacred nature, He borrowed from man, „a series of qualities and faults typically human: mercy but also hatred, joy or sorrow, forgiveness and revenge” (Biriș 1996, 145).

„The ancient Greek culture gave genii to the humanity in almost all fields of spiritual creation.” (Biriș 1996, 149). Speculative thinking, philosophy, mathematics, medicine, literary creation, architectural arts, sculpture, painting, etc. developed. Hesiod's „Theogony” and Homer's poems describe the world of the immortal gods that intervene in the human world, where they show similar behaviors. The Roman culture borrowed heavily from ancient Greece, but the Roman genius shall prove „a special inclination to useful activity” and at the same time, will open itself to transformation „toward the type of cultures of rationalizing pragmatic creativity.” (Biriș 1996, 152).

Originality is proven by Ioan Biriș in the formulation of the spatio-temporal representations.

(iv) *Thought and religion in pragmatic-rationalizing creativity cultures.* This type corresponds to the West European cultures. However, modern Europe would not exist in its patterns, if certain events and historical processes did not occur. Commenting Constantin Noica's book – *Modelul european* – Ioan Biriș brings into discussion the Byzantine synthesis of Greek, Latin, Christian and Oriental elements. It is the time period in which Christian dogmas were set and the Church organized. Partially in the Byzantine era for a millennium, the medieval transition took place, marked by hearsays, so that modernization takes place „by reference to the religious spirituality” (Biriș 1996, 189). Modern culture started in Renaissance and involved taking over a few fundamental ideas that will trigger an accelerated development of science, technology, and a special socio-political evolution.

In short, about professor and philosopher Ioan Biriș one may say a lot, but we should emphasize that his work contributed clarifications and subtle nuances through refined logical instruments concerning certain open problems in the Romanian philosophical thought.

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