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**Summary of Doctoral Dissertation**

**Cultural and theological movements in modernism and  
postmodernism. Atheism Drama of Ivan Karamazov**

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## Summary

### **Theological and cultural movements in modernism and postmodernism.**

#### **Drama of Atheism of Ivan Karamazov**

The doctoral work, entitled "Theological and cultural movements in Modernism and Postmodernism. Drama of Atheism of Ivan Karamazov" tries an analysis and study upon God's reality in the theological and cultural space. More exactly, it tries to notice the changes and transformations suffered by faith in God and the relation of man with God in Modernism and Postmodernism. Secularization was and is the complex phenomenon and much debated not only in the theological field but also in the fields of humanism. It has been spoken about a dilution of faith in God, it has been prophesied a vanishing of religious in the life of mankind and after all it was observed that everything what secularization announced it has been proved to be a wrong calculation. The man has not given up to God and to Christian life and as a consequence both in the private space and in the public one he has confessed the faith in God in a *theo* – logical way.

The doctoral work contains three big themes. The first refers to a history of phenomenon of secularization with its manifestations in culture and society then treats the phenomenon of secularization from a theological view of point as absence of God and as death of God according to some protestants theologians who treated about the reality of God, the second part underlines the transformations which take place in postmodernism in the theological field, respectively, the recovering of theological meaning, and the third put in the light a phenomenology of faith in the dostoevskian opera.

Separation between Church and State, between theology and culture, the independence of man from God, the replacing of God with man, the centrality of man within culture and re-evaluation of human values are only a few definitions which try to comprise the complexity of such a phenomenon. The sociology, psychology, anthropology, history and the philosophy of religion, politics and economics understand the secularization according to their principles. But theology sees more complexity in such a phenomenon and draws attention upon awful consequences for man. Leaving the communion with God, forgetting his own icon or his own origin has only one result, the death. Theology has played its own role in the secularization of culture and society. Instead to offer to man the access to God, theology takes out man from the sphere of divine grace and along with him the entire creation that God and the world seem to be two autonomous realities and even opposite each other. Thus the phenomenon of secularization was not a simple phenomenon occurred only in the relations between culture and society but it had also an utterly origin, maybe the real one, the cause of secularization.

The secularization and the atheism manifested themselves against faith confessing when God was not any more seen as a personal God who loves and open for communion with man but He was the Supreme Being, distant, unable to show his care regarding the mankind. Theology was not able any more to talk about the relevance of God and more worse it exposed a false exploration into God. Undermining the

possibility of revelation of God within the world was as an examination for theology. Such kind of subjects: possibility of God's revelation, possibility of theological discourse, reality of liturgical act understood as meeting between man and divine, the partaking of man at divine grace, all these have been put under question.

But secularization was for theology a good opportunity to renounce at the false sacred and partiality. This was the positive effect of secularization within theology. Deconstruction was the one that played the important role against false sacred and partiality.

Many theologians from West accepted the secular thinking in their reflections. Works as *End of Religion*, *Death of God Theology*, *Absence of God*, *Atheist Belief in God* speak about atheism as a natural horizon of the new theological system. It should be emphasized that secularization did not manifest itself in theology skeptically about existence of God. It pretended that God cannot be from this world of beings but from a world that can not be spoken. Although it did not negate the existence or the reality of God, secularization separated more acutely man from God. According to secularization, every affirmation about God is only a human affirmation without any real reference to what it wants to say. Because God is not from our world, we cannot make affirmations about Him. This led to a crisis in faith that God was declared irrelevant or dead. The changing from theology led to an absence of God as the central theme in theology and as a result, theology spoke rather about an experience of absence of God: the experience of the absence of God as the symbol of real God. The western theology was provoked to fight against absence of God but after all it reached again an absence of God equal with his dead. The modern time is stamped by absence of God, in the sense that mankind does not see any more the work of God in the world and also they do not understand this reality, God.

Generally speaking, theology borrowed reflections from philosophy and then it met philosophical aporias that aporias and agnosticism became the result of debates about God. In this way, God became unknowable. Noteworthy is that the western theologians, specially the protestants theologians, tried to defend the legitimacy of affirmations about God and to take out from theology the absence of God as a theme. Many of them understood that theology must give an answer in the secular space regarding the reality of God. It was really hard for theology to talk about God when it was broken from its roots. That was actually a cause of secular theology and its subject was lost. Its subject became even an illusion, a human projection as Feuerbach spoke about God. Many theologians tried to save God but in the end they changed God into man. But even so, they carry on to talk about God. Man needed God even in this technological space. Secularization asked theology to start from a different point to talk about God. It was rather an anti-theistic movement then atheistic.

**The Phenomenon of Secularization from a social-historical perspective.** In the western world, in the last time, it took place some serious changes between religion and culture, especially in relations regarding the Christian Church. The independence of cultural world to Christianity and especially to Christian Church was understood as an expression of human affirmation over the dominant clerical thinking. Through secularization the Church lost its central position as an expression of a fall from biblical God and according to others, the ecclesiastical form of the church became outdated. Because of an progress in society religion lost its power over the unity of society, although it remains in society as a part of society. Richard Fenster translated the word *secularization* with the meaning of an liberation of historical thinking from the connections of a biblical and theological world. H. Berker underlines that through technology the world became secularized. In 1953, Karl Löwith in his work, *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen*, described the modern philosophy as a result of secularization of theology of history.

Consequently, it has been proved that the concept of secularization has many meanings and for that it has been for many times criticized.

The Reform played a big role in developing secularization when man came in a direct contact with the Bible and additionally as a result of the fall of man from God, it was not possible at all for man to come into contact with God. The faith alone was the single way to contact God. Outside of faith there was not chance to contact God. The Separation between God and man was fulfilled. So Ernst Troeltsch understood in Protestantism the metaphysical and religious fundament.

The history was analyzed in such a way that God has disappeared from thinking. Religion was only a characteristic of no education that after the progress of education it disappeared from educational plan, no being any more as part of culture. Karl Jaspers in his philosophy of history does not speak about as a centre of history but about of a axle of history. The man is the engine of this progress; he is the center of culture. The industrial revolution replaced the spiritual happiness with the material happiness. They tried happiness under the motto "we become happy in security". The industrial revolution pays more and more attention to material life. In America the situation was more different. The industrial and technological revolution did not fight against its cultural past. The separation between state and church in America was from the beginning the organizational form of the church.

Another important role in the European culture has been played by capitalism. It has found a place in West of Europe. It has received a strong support from Calvinism. Calvinism greeted the economical impact of capitalism. The economical betrayal was treated very sharp by Calvinism with biblical text from the Old Testament. Calvinism encouraged the culture of credit and taxes. The work received sacramental values especially for puritans.

The French revolution played a quiet big role in the secularization of Europe. From cultural perspective the French revolution aimed a secularization of society through some philosophical ideas produced in the culture of time. Secularization tried to break Christianity through legislation and force. Secularization meant anticlericalism, forbidden of liturgical practice, private or publicly, many churches were closed and a revolutionary calendar replaced the Christian one. A new cultic movement appeared based on rationality. The attitude of French revolution was supported by the philosophers of that time. Voltaire and Rousseau were the spiritual tutors of movement against Christianity. The first published The Civil Constitution of Clergy and the second. Because the Christian God was not more the real God, Christianity might not be the real religion but the enemy of real religion. The Cross, the Christian relics had not have any real connection with real religion, they were representatives of a fallen religion. Ironically, a catholic priest in 1733 left as a testament after his death one of the best books about atheism where the Church was denounced as a permanent fraud for political and religious propaganda.

In the western world appeared a tendency to form own life according to antic thought. In the XVII century the coming back at the antic world got a new function because such a returning had not as basis Christian culture but the human nature as a sample for the new world order. It is not talk about a characteristic of a new secular sphere in connection with Christianity and by Christianity made but it appears a new foundation of a new cultural order based on man. From an anthropological view of point, secularization appeared because people have not any more in their aim the problems which offered them a sense of life. A life full of meaning was only offered by religion: it offers an orientation in their life. The high leveled life nowadays has lost the orientation of Holy Fathers.

The human thinking sees religion as a stop against human progress. Later, the modern humanism was characterized by arrogance, revolt against God. The Humanists see themselves as arbiters of human existence and the modern culture became obsessed with autonomy of human person and with the pretensions of humanity with the better conditions of life. The main difficulty of humanism was the incapability to find God in universe. The new situation asked for a new way to talk about God, in a way different than the old one. The criticism against the traditional mode to talk about God from Catholicism and Protestantism appeared from the deepest values of these churches that tried to embody them. On the other side, people from rational sphere looked for a better sense of life. The result was that it was more and more difficult to talk about God and with God. The liberal Christianity left Christ of the Church for an historical Jesus of the synoptically Gospels. Christ of Church was only a simple creation of Paul, the real author of the Church. The search for a historical Jesus of the Gospels who lived in history has renounced at the told stories from Gospels about his divinity, looking only for a human Jesus with his teaching without the death on the cross and with his resurrection from the death. Secularization meant a fundamental uncertainty for man in his new world created by him. All kinds of spiritual movements which appear are provoked there where secularization was complete. For Christianity's restoration was necessary its interpretation and its mode to talk about God. Being in a space of plurality, religion could not offer a way to get out from this situation because Christianity itself was pluralized, the affirmations about the truth are themselves pluralized. Transmission of the gospel truth was lost its plausibility and the problems of individual which before were resolved through religion remain and became intense. The modern man replaced religion with poetry or with the admiration of an art work, more appropriated to modern man. According to Berger, the deficit of secular culture meant the lost of traditional orientation both in public and private sphere. Before, the orientation in culture was offered by religion. In this way the individual gained new liberties but too a stare of cultural conflicts. The Christian faith seems to fall under success, the Kingdom of God was not more the cultural kingdom as its symbol, as a concrete form. The civilization contract was kept by new hands.

**The Post-Secular Society.** At the beginning of XXI century everything what seems to be lost is come back. What was old fashionable appears again in debates. All the fields of cultures bear the signature of such dialectic. Religion is also implicated. The prophesy of a total disappear of religion under the condition of modernity was false. Supposition that the economical and technological progress and the political emancipation from religion in the form of separation between State and Church will force religion to disappear was also false. This was real in America, too.

By post-secular society we understand now the society where religion offers an unexpected opposition. The influence of Christian Churches over society and of different forms of religion put under question the secular thesis. Religion comes back as an actor on the political scene. Actually, many promises of progress are fulfilled and not a few parts of religion are leered from signification. But in the end, religion has survived. Religion has affirmed itself after waves of secularization and demythologization. Modernism is not surer for secularization of religion, for losing of religious significance. That the modernism was separated from religion became an illusion. Demythologizing became a myth. The signs of time proved that it took place a political and social revival of religion in association with crisis of rationalist ideologies which in modernity served as basis for atheism. Even the contemporaneous philosophy was penetrated by religious traditions. Today, philosophers speak more and more and without any justification about angles, salvation and some various religious representatives and in philosophy the religious terms are again at work. Affirmations as *Bring God back into the secular public square* are again mentioned in the public life. The attack was against secular state and America was an example.

We must not forget that has meant an attack against a form of theism, against the opinion that it would exist in this world a Being, all-powerful, intelligible called God. Along of secularization and from its atheism is expressed liberation of man from this God, as projection. Secularization and atheism are in some degree against Christian faith specially when this is bond from a form of theism that under the name, God, is understood The Great Metaphysic.

**Absence of God or the death of God as the mode of God's existence.** The process or the phenomenon of secularization regards in the first time the possibility of faith in God with a cosmo-theocentric understanding of the world. For Christian faith, the secularization phenomenon was an exam. It provoked religion and forced it to defend itself, to prove the possibility of revelation of God in this world. Secularization was a real process and not only a phenomenon which found a place in the theological field through a critical analysis and through an undermining of possibility of God to be revealed, of theological discourse, of legitimating of liturgical act as a reality ended with a meeting between man and God, of man's partaking at the grace of God. Although the process of secularization demythologized even God, in the sense of a total expelling from this world in a world totally different then ours, it offered to theology the chance to renounce at a false sacred and partiality both in the field of theological discourse and of liturgical practice. From this perspective, the secularization phenomenon has played a positive role in re-thinking the theological truth then it helped to a better enunciation of possibilities of meeting between man and God, a reality that was negated by modernism. The real incarnation of Jesus Christ, the maxim unity between man and God was the critical point for secular thinking dominated by the impossibility of divine intervenes in our world. The rationality and critical analysis were the engine of secularization and the perspective over this world.

Secularization phenomenon must not be understood as a single direction, negation of God's reality as transcendent reality (atheism), but it pretended to theology that God is not from our world of beings but He is from a total different world unable to be expressed. From this perspective, the secularization phenomenon could not be accurately defined and characterized. But a thing is sure: not only that it provoked theology to give an answer about presence of God in this world, no negating the real existence of God, secularization has separated man from God much more just because God is not from our world and we have not chance to make affirmations about Him, Who is He, what does He want to do with our world. So that, every affirmation about God is only a human affirmation directed not to God but to man because the affirmation characterizes man not God.

The transformations within theology led the faith in God in crisis that the main subject of theology was the absence of God. The absence of God in the theological discourse seems to characterize the modern theology. What has been affirmed till a moment in history was not surer so that the old image of God seemed to be destroyed. It was supposed that the new transformation in culture and in the horizon of human understanding has arrived at the affirmation of *death of God*. Or this death of God, atheistic understood, became an ideological interpretation of the new horizon of understanding. The death of God as the absence of God. The reality of God was the central problem of theology. The experience of absence of God has been seen as a proof that man built for himself a false image of God that now in confrontation with the new reality of the world cannot resist and for supporting the true God, this false image should be undermined.

Theology was in situation when it had to speak to people about the work of God in the world but at the same time theology understood the situation that the available and the classic language did not correspond to such a task but it was against it. Theology has tried to escape from this absence of God in the discourse

about God but on the other side theology has tried to imply again this absence of God under various theological directions. Its aim was not to draw itself into a theological ghetto and not to expel the forms of philosophical thought and the theological premises because it would have been put under question the affirmation about God. The theme *absence of God* has appertained to protestant theology meantime the catholic theology was trying to get out from scholasticism. But theology in this time remained at a philosophical stage. For ones God drew totally in transcendence ( Barth and Gogarten ) and for this reason God had to appear to man's understanding as The Absent, for others God had to come down totally in human existence ( Bultmann and Braun ). Some theologians bound the name of God with the future ( Moltmann and Pannenberg ). The protestant theologians dared to talk about the reality of God as absent but their theological affirmations under the pressure of philosophical critics and through the new horizon of understanding arrived in the corner of theology of death of God as a necessary reality. But theology because undertook the premises of philosophical thinking has produced again limits in discussions about God. The fight against absence of God has born another absence of God equal with his death.

Many theologians have been agreed that the absence of God characterized the theological situation. Heinz Zahrnt was saying: " every time when the discussion is about God it is important to observe that the theological situation is definitely determined by affirmation of death of God. The absurdity of such an affirmation brings under focus the absence of God where this affirmation must be understood both as hiding of God or non-experience of God and as absence of God or experience of non-existence of God. In this complexity we can understand that the destiny of man is a hidden God. Another theologian, John A. T. Robinson in his work, *Honest to God or Gott ist anders*, touches this problem of absence of God. He was convinced that from a modern view of point, man must refuse the traditional theism and at the same time, all together the most important theological concepts: God, super-natural, religion. In his work he is against Paul Tillich, Rudolf Bultmann and Dietrich Bonhoeffer who speak about a new transcendence and about a new understanding of God for the modern man. His study on possibility of experience of God and of His understanding proposes the necessity of creation of a new divine essence for the future of theology able to bring significance to Christian faith. Such a transformation to understand God raises many questions that the old images about God met their finish. Others recognized that this is a sign of experience of absence of God.

The mode of traditional understanding of theology was lost after the contact with others fields of culture. According to G. Bergman, theology confronted not only with ideological atheism but also with its materialist and anthropological forms and with practical atheism characterized by indifferentism, secularism, pragmatism, anti-theism that wants God dead so that man can live with a dead God, with radical existentialism that affirms that there is no personal God. For theologians and for those interested in the reality of God atheism seemed to be the space of life and the real understanding of God. The western theology accepted fully this mode of understanding in the debate about God. According to Ernst Bloch " only an atheist can be a good Christian and only a good Christian can be a good atheist. " Through theology atheism is discovered more large. Smashing of old images of God led to a Christian atheism and at the possibility of an atheistic way to believe in God. This is the reason for which theology focused so much on reality or un-reality of God. The absence of God meant for others the necessary consequence in the contemporaneous horizon of understanding God. The absence of God was a mode to speak or to understand God.

The death of God as a way to speak about God became for many a legitimate way. According to H. Thieliicke the situation can be described as follows: " Maybe there was a God responsible for his death, maybe He has never existed, so that the death of God was only the death of illusion. Or this death of God

meant that He died only in our perspective and through this is affirmed only the death of experiencing God, the erosion of a certainty and through this was touched a reformation of an image of God unknown till then.” Then not God is dead but only a form of our faith about God. Then the death of God is something symbolist that a form of our experience-living of God found the final. The death of God was interpreted only as a result in history. Such an interpretation was preferred in the way that Christianity has no connection with such a theism and it must be found new ways of thinking able to discover the real Christianity. But because God has been reduced to a concept He was not more understood as a God, that is why He appears dead, as a way to speak. The modern man was touched by the new Gospel, the death of God and he agrees now that is not enough to say only that God lives because this affirmation does not bring God back.

**Premises of absence of God.** It was a beginning that led the theological situation at this stage. An important role was played by philosophical problems from the XVII, XVIII and XIX centuries. Philosophy had its influence upon theology twofold: it penetrated the way of thinking in theology and on the other hand, theology intervened in philosophical thinking and it participated at its aporias. Theology caused its own aporias even in its confrontation with philosophy. The problem of absence of God had its own philosophical history. It is hard to find a point of beginning for this subject. The experience of God was given for some time to the world. For the first time this thinking appeared in Descartes’ thinking. This *I am* of Descartes is the beginning point in his reflections about God and the world and both these two realities can be verified in the base of this *I am*. This is the beginning of *metaphysics of subjectivity* that rejects at the same time the transcendental origin of the world. Another important role was played by Kant with his thinking. His critic in his philosophical thinking had a catastrophic influence upon traditional fundamentals regarding the existence of God. In his critic reflections Kant refused the ability of man to know God. In these two philosophers there are the philosophical premises for absence of God. Actually, both philosophy and theology have lost their subject although the former word has still remained in use. Philosophy cannot make affirmations about its central theme, although the old metaphysical realities about God, life everlasting and freedom are still used in philosophy. Agnosticism as aporia seems to be unavoidable.

**The seekers of God. Karl Barth (1886 -1968 ).** He was wondering if the protestant theology speaks about the real and lively God. He was worried if man has not created a image of God after his likeness or he was wondering if this theology that started from man is not a blasphemy before God. He did not find in historical and critical method upon Scriptures a help for a responsible discussion about God. Not man but God must be the beginning point in discussion about God. His effort focused to bring theology and the gospel on the right way. Theology needed the right point from where to start. According to Barth, man had to renounce at a faith in God based on natural and human evidences, from history, psychology philosophy or other profane and scientific evidences. His opinion was that protestant theology chose a wrong point of departure. Karl Barth’s theology was written with a scope and orientated against a situation. Secularization was for him in connection with the concept of religion. Secularization was going to atheism, against the possibilities of revelation of God in the world and to reduce God at simple human concepts, without any divine content. Actually, theology has been secularized or secularization with its modalities penetrated the space of theology. Religion was the human wish to have God at its proposal, so that God was only a human image. That is why, religion is unbelief. So thought, it could not exist an anthropological basis in human being to go to God. Barth’s critic was against religion as a work of man, the same critic as in Feuerbach’s critic, but Barth tries to defend revelation of God against religion. Henri Bouillard characterizes Barth’s theology as a revelation of God wholly other than in other religions. Barth

focuses to make possible a revelation of God in this world. In his reflection he kept the protestant view about the radical fall of man from communion with God. This theology obliges Barth not to recognize any possibility of a dialog between man and God, or any relationship between the two. He refuses all is called natural theology, a natural revelation of God and on the other hand he agrees that from nature, history or human existence God cannot arrive to us. There is only one orientation, from up to down and not from down to up. God remains God and the world remains world. In a not seen till then manner Barth separates God from the world. God is there, he is wholly other and in a wholly other place, he appears absent. What Barth offers is only an abyss between God and man, deep enough. From man there is not access to God. God remains God and there is no transitional point between man and God, heaven and earth, created and uncreated. From man to God there is no chance to reach. For man, God is untouchable, unreachable, all the bridges are broken. There is only distance and far away. ” God is not identical with what we call God, with what man supposes to be God. So awful is the distance and aloofness between God and man, so fundamental is the unlikeness, so wholly other is God that does not remain only the absence. ” Barth recognizes in this fundamental absence of God the single possible presence of God in the world. For Barth, revelation is an act, event: something is happening, something made by God and we are implicated. The assertion of content of revelation is indented and it is in connection with the human sphere. If we indentify revelation with a set of texts or with a human particular person, with a set of historical acts, with a spiritual or ethical teaching, then we localizes it from historical sphere from where it is. So thought, we must take God out from any human considerations because God is not of history in this way and he cannot be localized with such terms. If that happens, then God assumes objects, events, words, ideas and other worldly entities and shares over them the capacity they do not have it. We must not confuse revelation with what we know about God. Although Barth offers attention at revelation of God in Jesus Christ, his Christology bears the trace of a non ended distance between God and man. God as an absolute subject remains hidden in his revelation. He cannot become object, He is not knowable, to be the content of affirmations. Theology of Barth kept the transcendence of God in a total way that did not afford him to speak about God in human sphere. Barth’s theology travelled from a secular theology where God was in this world till an absence of God where God was transferred in a wholly other world, God was expelled from this world, forgetting the Christological theology of the old Church. To know God is impossible for this world. And because God is wholly other then it is impossible for man to speak about him.

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer – the mature man: abolition of God as working hypothesis.** He was the son of a teacher in psychiatry and the cultural atmosphere from his home with a big influence over him was secularist and humanist. His father and his brothers were agnostics. He was a good knower of history of philosophy and of Russian literature, of Berdyaev, Soloviov, and Nietzsche. As a surprise for his family he orientated himself toward theology. In his theology there are two strong related concepts: a-religious and maturity. The concept of *maturity* in his thinking is related to non-religious existence of man. God, from a religious perspective understood, ” the biggest essence, the strongest, the best, ” or God as a working hypothesis is not more necessary. Man succeeds to live on without this God as the traditional idea of metaphysics. He can live without religion. What understands Bonhoeffer under this term, *religion*, is nothing more than the *completion of reality through God*. Man frees himself from any form of tutelage. He does not need any more of God as working hypothesis in politics, science and philosophy. Man has demonstrated that every moral, scientifically and philosophical problem can be solved without God. Religion withdraws itself. The God of religion is for Bonhoeffer only an idol and for this reason he opposes the God of faith to the god of religion. The maturity of the world or its autonomy has meant abolition of God as working hypothesis. Bonhoeffer understands every return to God as working

hypothesis as an act of despair, a mortal jump back in the Middle Age. In Barth's case, rejection of religion has as aim the strengthen of God's reality and of his revelation and in Bonhoeffer's case rejection of religion is the result of assumption without hesitation of secularization. Rejection of religion according to Bonhoeffer means rejection of a god by man created, according his imagination. He urges the Christian apologetics to renounce at absence of God with the cost of man's maturity. God who was drowning from the world was in his understanding that god, deus ex machina of immature man, non-autonomous from the old times. Bonhoeffer thinks theologically and offers to absence of God a theological understanding. Through this expression " as there is no God " *Bonhoeffer understands the absence of God as presupposition of world's maturity: God obliges us to recognize: Our arrival at maturity leads us to recognize our situation before God.... God who sends us in the world without the working hypothesis of God is God before we stay. Before God and with God we live without God.* " The absence of God receives according to Bonhoeffer an Christological perspective. His Christology is put together with the death of Christ on the cross an important point that determines the historical situation of man: " God has permitted to be pushed outside from the world on the cross. He is weak and without power in the world and this is the only way for him to be with us and the only way to help us. The text from Mathew ( 8, 17 ) explains clearly that Christ can help us not in the virtue of his omnipotence but with his weakness and suffering. So explains Bonhoeffer the absence of God in the world, through this Christology that determines the stare of man in the world. The death on the cross convinces man that he must live in the world as if there is no God and this is a non-religious interpretation of God. The event of Christ's death is the event through God is pushed outside of the world. This thing forces man to live theologically, as if there is no God and forces us to recognize that we must live in the world only in this way if we want to be honest not only with us but also with God. His position regarding religion is based on Judaism:" Freedom towards circumcision is at the same time freedom towards religion. By giving up to religion, the world put aside the false image of God and opened a new mode to see God in this world who gains power and space through his weakness. This is the start point for a non-religious interpretation. The experience of God is found only there where the human power is gone down. God Himself becomes deus ex machine, He becomes dispensable and used when man wants to enlarge his limits.

For Bonhoeffer the two realities, the non-religious interpretation and the loosing of religion are strong related. His aim is to put an end to reality without God. For Bonhoeffer there is no such a completion of the reality of the world as a prolongation of the world, deus ex machina. Man should live as *etsi deus non daretur*, as there is no God. Bonhoeffer takes seriously the existence of God. No doubt that the way of life without God is not a situation for him to put it aside but this affirmation without God wants to transform it into an Christian affirmation. Bonhoeffer goes on from Gospel and Christ and he wants to transform the absence of God in presence of God or he wants to talk about presence of God in absence of God. For Bonhoeffer the absence of God is not the result of a man who capitulates in the world because he has lost God but this is the theological consequence in the deepest way. To loose religion appears in Bonhoeffer's reflection as a situation where the life without God is stopped. On the one hand, Bonhoeffer does not pretend to think God without the world and on the other hand, the world without God. It is a paradox so resolved by Bonhoeffer: " not to think God without the world refers to God who let himself to be pushed outside from the world and in this way He is related to world. To let himself to be pushed outside from the world, to leave the world it is all something ells then a missing relation. This is the most intensive relation. The established relation by leaving must not be understood negatively. It implies even intensification.

For Bonhoeffer the religious man is an idolatrous man as was in Kant's reflection, but man without God, no. The God of religion is as a deus ex machine who is invoked when man needs Him. If God is located outside from human limits, religion becomes a special space of life to relate with God, or a special place for God. But this is a wrong space. In Bonhoeffer's case, the believer knows where God is. When man stays before his suffering and his weakness, he stays before God. Here one can talk worldly – profane about God in comparison with the religious discourse which sends man to God's power. The non-religious stare, the process of becoming mature assumes the cross of suffering and the missing power of the world before God as if there is no God. In Bonhoeffer's thinking we find a dialectic of absence and presence of God. God who is absent, who cannot be used as a working hypothesis, is not the false God the God of religion. This is the real God, the God of bible. The false God of religion, deus ex machine, is present when man wants it, He comes when He is invited. The real God is not so: He is the absent God from Gethsemane. The real God is present through cross. By his suffering and by his weakness He is able to offer to the world his help. The non-religious interpretation of Bonhoeffer asks for absence of God in his presence. This is a serious interpretation of Bonhoeffer from the existence of cross called by Bonhoeffer, stopping a life without God. Theology of Bonhoeffer leads really to an absence of God that later is found in theology of death of God. Both Bonhoeffer and Barth identify the God of religion with the God of metaphysics. Both of them considers that the god of religion and the god of metaphysics are the highest manifestation of human sin, as a revolt of man against God. According to Bonhoeffer, the big virtue of Barth is his critic against religion. But he believes that his critic was not enough developed. For Barth, religion is a significant sign of fallen man while for Bonhoeffer religion appears as a cultural Western phenomenon which shortly will disappear because the world is today mature.

**Friedrich Gogarten ( 1887-1967 ) : Christian and Secular.** As many theologians did, Friedrich Gogarten undertook the call of Karl Barth. In this context we must understand his theological thinking. Touched by the same questions, moved by the same thoughts, he tried to find an own way to speak about God. He was saying: " We are all so deep in human rooted that we have lost God. We have lost him. Yes, we have really lost him. There is no thought in us to reach God. They do not succeed the human limits. Nor even one limit." Gogarten felt this situation of God's absence. In this way he says : " We cannot think of God but we know what He is not, what He cannot be. Man cannot think wrong and we cannot think wrong and to accept what is human instead what divine is." According to Gogarten secularization means also a profane world, the deities from the world have been rejected, the world has not been more sacred. Christianity was the one that made the world profane because it has reestablished the relation between man and the world. Man has reached the maturity, according to Galatians (4, 1) and he has received the power to decide for himself what is useful and not. A second meaning of secularization is separation between faith and the human acts, his deeds. Man has reached his maturity as son of God and he stays before God as a responsible person for itself and the others. He is defined by his own knowing and by his responsible activity for his life. So speaking, his deeds, his acts from science, art, economical and political life or family life are led exclusively by ration. The faith is orientated towards hidden being of God and his deeds are orientated exclusively towards the world. The deeds cannot affect the faith and the faith cannot affect the human deeds. In this way the entire activity of man becomes a problem of human responsibility. The life becomes secular. According to Gogarten, secularization is a consequence of Christian faith. The Christian faith is the cause of secularization. That is why is not allowed in the name of faith to be analyzed. More, it must be promoted in the name of faith. The third meaning of secularization is his own realization and his own formation through culture. Just because his deeds are orientated exclusively towards ration, outside from contextual faith, they are not more open towards the mystery of the world. Now man operates independently from divine mystery.

Gogarten tries to change the relationship of man with the world starting from a theological reformatory point of view, justification. Man stays not any more before God as justified but he is moved between God and the world as Gogarten showed in his work, *Man between God and the World*. In this position gains man his right relation with God and the world. Gogarten had observed the danger from this relation: God was not more God and the world was not more world, their places were changed. This danger wants Gogarten to be removed through justification principle where he develops the aspect about creation. The justified man before God means to recognize the world as God's creation. They are related each other: man received his salvation from God only when he accepts the right relation with the world and he sees it as God's creation. According to Gogarten, man's justification must not be separated by this acknowledgement; otherwise he will be on a wrong way. Gogarten associates the teaching about justification with that of sonship. As a consequence of justification, man becomes the mature son and so from here he deduces the secularization of the world. In this sonship is embraced the new fundamental relation with the world and with God. Through sonship man recognizes God as father and the man is recognized as son. Only so, man has the right position. He is again what God wished with him. For Gogarten, this relation was perverted: the human powers were seen as divine. Instead of God was the creation. This was the original sin of man when the real God was the absent one. Gogarten uses the text from I Corinthians ( 6, 12 ) which becomes a theological principle. He understands the word of Paul the strongest words have ever been said. " All is permitted to man" takes its origin from the sonship of man which means freedom towards the world and towards the powers that penetrated it. Through this *all is allowed* is regarded that No towards a sacral understanding of the world. The world is profane in every space. This profane character does not leave open the boundary to the sacred and the same to the religious and sacred actions or to sacred institutions. Secularization receives a positive direction which meant an affirmation against a religious respect toward the world and it transformed the world profane. Secularization freed the man from sin, to respect the world as a god. The world is not more seen as a god, now it is seen ruled by human rationality, it is not more mythical but historical. Secularization is an authentic development of Christianity with the meaning of liberation of man from the meanings with a divine power. As a result, according to Gogarten after this separation, God is opposite to the world, He is unworldly. God is opposite towards the world in a total mode. Gogarten believes that man cannot experience God in this world. Gogarten refuses a manifestation of the revealed God in this world. God has nothing to do with this world. For him there is this danger from man, to respect the world instead of God and as God. God of Christian faith is different then this world, He is over-worldly, or more, separated from world, He has not the world in His constitution. Through this emancipation the world is so deep separated that we can speak about the absence of God. Gogarten wants to eliminate the secularization and the absence of God but in the end he reaches only the absence of God.

**Rudolf Bultmann ( 1884-1976 ). Reality of God in the program of demythologizing.** Rudolf Bultmann is one of theologians who announced a powerful war against absence of God. His entire work is grouped around the problem of realization of revelation and from this reason he dedicated himself to the problem of revelation. His aim was to offer a meeting between God's reality and man's reality. God was for him too, an absent. His theology wanted to serve God's revelation and not to human religious endeavors. It must reach God. According to his work, *Glauben und Verstehen* , Bultmann wants to orientate revelation from Christian Gospel towards man in a way that man can understand it. Entire his theological work wanted to put an end to God's absence. Towards this aim were orientated his endeavors: the program of demythologizing, the hermeneutical method and existentialist interpretation of Gospel. If the understanding of the Gospel is penetrated by science and technology then, for Bultmann the biblical word is mythological. The modern man can not have access at salvation just because of mythological

elements from his faith. As a result, the Gospel should be demythologized. So to speak, the modern man do not accept any more divine intervention in the world. Bultmann does not succeed to reject this absence of God from theology. That happened because Bultmann uses the existentialist interpretation of the New Testament. According to Heidegger, existentialist meant that there is no possibility for God to be expressed in such a thinking system. The result was that man was seen only within this world. For Heidegger it is impossible to make affirmations about God in a existentialist way. About God can man talk only making a reference at man, as his characteristic, asking about God. Admitting that he cannot know God but only his reality, asking about God, He can be revealed to man only in faith as *entire other*. It can be said that God is totally something else then man, a metaphysical being or the Irrational. When man is asked how is possible a discussion about God, he can answer: only as a discussion about two us. ” About God speaks theology only in the way when it speaks about man, how he stays before God, how does he speak about God from faith.” That means that outside within him, he cannot speak about God. Or only in connection with his ego, he can speak about God. Theology must not be dissolved in anthropology. But when man wants to speak about God, he must speak openly about himself. Revelation of God as a event happened in the history has not taken place and it loses its dimensions but it is moved within man’s faith as a proper human understanding. Demythologizing meant elimination of transcendental reality. Another result of method applied by Bultmann was a separation between historical Jesus and Christ of faith and that meant a Jesus Christ without a historical reality and no Revelation. That meant that God has not come to mankind truly. The biblical realities loose the historical reality that the work of God and his revelation fall under the slogan of mythology. According to W. Knevels Bultmann’s theology is not a science nor a original philosophy but simply a philosophy in the meaning of an anthropology that has as result the absence of God. K. Bockmühl thinks that Bultmann’s exposition closes the world before any work of God over the world. About God one can talk only from analysing ego as experience.

**Gerhard Ebeling: The reality of God in the Word-Event.** Because of dissolution of God’s reality in the world’s reality and at the same time of His transcendence and too, of losing his immanence in world’s reality, Ebeling offers a new understanding of God in the Word-Event. His efforts are against of God’s absence in the theological discussions caused by an old language of the past where theology is deep rooted. He does not agree with this separation of reality in transcendent and immanent, natural and supra-natural. He wants to embrace God and the world in a single reality where the world must be contained. The fight against a corrupted language and for a real discussion about God was in Ebeling’s theology a fight against absence of God from theological discourse. Ebeling orientated himself against the silence regarding God that means the absence of God. He observed that discussion about God has become heavy and even impossible. This kind of discussion about God does not use adequate realities when it speaks about God and that is why many consider this theology an ideology in contradictions or even kept away from the proper life. On the other hand, in basis of verification principle, theology has become inauthentic.

Ebeling speaks about the experience of God’s reality in this world and about the possibility of affirmation about God. Such a false thinking, that keeps God as a part of reality, that subordinates God its laws, this mixture of God with a god thought worldly, is the basis of today atheism. Against this atheism is the thinking about God where God and the world are separated radically. A God distinguished from the world, a god who is correctly thought objectively, is anyway a part of the world, it would be called by man supra-natural, the opposite reality. If God is separated radically from the thought reality in all its forms, then to God is refused any reality. To talk about an experience of God in the World and to

make affirmations about God, Ebeling starts from Jesus from Nazareth. In Jesus Christ God arrives to people in a worldly way and through Jesus can be God understood worldly. Who speaks about a knowing of God before to know God in Jesus Christ, according to Ebeling, he left the basis of a worldly discussion about God. Only in Jesus as an Event, man has the worldly word of God and he experiences what from God comes. Jesus as event is the only reality for everybody where God can be affirmed in a human language.

According to Ebeling, the modern man can meet Jesus Christ and more exactly through Jesus expressed in the word. The meeting with Jesus is translated through the Word-Event and this plays an important role for worldly discourse about God. The worldly experience of God and the worldly discourse about God are not stopped because Jesus Christ along with his deeds are in the past but they are together possible because Jesus Christ is present in the Word-Event. This is for Ebeling the possibility of an worldly affirmation about God. An worldly discussion about God is true if the divine reality and the worldly one become in discussion as Word-Event ( the word produces the event ). The Word is what God and the world put together. For Ebeling, the entire discussion is an event of talk, an event of the Word. In the word and talk there are together God, the world, and the man. The mode of meeting is given in the word ( Word ). Because God and the world meet each other in the Word-Event then this coming together is an Event: the event of God and the event of the world. Only then the discussion about God is real when God as event comes in the world as word. Self donation of God is his historical existence. The meeting among God, the world and man becomes historical. The word is reality. The word contains all the human events and the entire human reality. What is in Jesus Christ expressed is the word, the word is what God let be revealed in this world. The worldly talk about God from Gospel consist more exactly in the fact that through Jesus the man is expressed God in human language. Ebeling does not start from God but from human appearances of Jesus and in this way he sees a secure talk about God in a worldly way and through this, accessible to man.

**Paul Tillich – God as a proper existence, the wholly other, or God as the deep of existence.** The entire his theological activity was against absence of God in the reality of our world. Paul Tillich tried in a new way to establish a new relationship between the two realities, God and man, to mediate a new experience of God's reality in the reality of the world without changing God's reality in a foreign one. Tillich has accused the Church because it has itself fortified behind of old formulas and terminologies to keep the biblical thinking. According to him, the Church has contributed at absence of God because it worked with an old terminology. Tillich was against the mode of Churches' sermon. Its word without sense is heard but nothing is felt. Tillich endeavored himself for central meanings, God, Christ, Revelation, meanings that seemed to be disappeared from theology. He focused on a method, called correlation. This method by him proposed has as aim a correspondence between religious symbols and what is symbolized. Correlation has its sense for the field of knowing and within this method a big role is played by the correlation between question-answer. The correlation's method is orientated towards only one question, about the last meaning and about the foundation of our existence. In this question, God in his revelation is the last and the absolute answer. Only between the fundamental man's questions and the revelation of God there is such a correlation. The symbols of Gospel appear all the time as answers at the existential questions come from human analyses. In this way, Tillich brings God into theological talk. The mutual dependence between questions and answers is crucial for theology to be a real theology. The correlation method exposes the Christian Gospel as answers at fundamental questions.

At the question about human existence Tillich comes in the virtue of a metaphysical shock that is got through an experience of an non-possible existence. The proof of an existence of God from a classic

theology and from philosophy of religion that wants to deduce the unconditional from the sphere of conditional makes possible to lose God. Because God only from God can be known, they operate only a theology of God's absence. Tillich pays attention also to the concepts to God applied. He rejects the terminology that is inadequate for God and that finally leads to God's negation. "The existence of God is a proper existence" is not only the fundamental affirmation about God but the affirmation to fight against false discussion about God. God as proper existence is for us the reality where we can meet him in the measure where He is us given as the Unconditioned. With the understanding of God as the *proper existence* Tillich wants to take to God's absence any possibility. With the fundamental affirmation that God is proper existence Tillich wants to save the transcendence of God. Only then when God is proper existence He can be the reality that addresses to us and as proper existence He can transcend all. As proper existence He exists over all what exists and next to all what exists. The existence of God and his proper existence in God's understanding according to Tillich seem to be identical. Because He is proper existence in reality He is absent. The structure of everything that exists is in God based as proper existence and from here Tillich finds the possibility to make affirmations about God. For Tillich theism is the deepest root of atheism because here God is ordinate as a being among others as part of entire reality. This logical theism caused the appearance of atheism. The possibility to defeat atheism consists in the experience of absolute faith. As a consequence, the Church should separate itself from this theism, to affirm His absence and then to find for Him a place over the God of theism. Only then the Church would find the courage to put an end to the actual disappointment and deficiency. The absolute faith of Tillich is a faith in God that succeeds the God of theism. On the one hand Tillich's endeavors fight against God's absence but on the other hand he renews this God's absence.

**The Death of God Theology: Impossibility of God's thinking and the giving up to transcendence.** Through Hegel has taken place the transfer of affirmation *God is dead* from theology in philosophy and the affirmation becomes a speculative affirmation. Within philosophy this affirmations receives an anti-theological philosophical form. The contradiction from philosophy consists in fact that it is a negation of theology from a theological perspective or it is a negation of theology to be again theology. So is characterized the Hegelian philosophy. According to Hegel, the incarnation is the emptiness of Spirit. The truth of theology had to be kept as truth and this made angry Feuerbach's thinking. "The Atheism, negation of theology is again negated. That means that theology is refreshed by philosophy. God is God only by the fact that He defeats the material. This is the negation from God. And in the end we are back from we have left, in the hands of Christian theology. The secret of Hegel's theology is that he negates theology by philosophy with the aim to negate philosophy by theology." God had been again rebuilt by his negation to come to true God. So to say, it had to believe atheistically. Feuerbach asks for renunciation at faith and man must be recognized as the real god. The secret of theology is anthropology. Hegel wanted to offer to modern times an atheistically concept of God while Feuerbach pretended a dissolution of theology in anthropology. With his criticism Feuerbach made the decisive step to separate the affirmation of death of God from how it was understood with the death on the cross. If in the Lutheran theology the death of God had an effect even over the essence of God and in the Hegelian philosophy expresses a restaurateur of God by negation as Christian atheism, without a annulment of God's reality, the death of God in the atheistic philosophy meant the death of a system more or less theological. The content of this expression "death of God" comes from religious and philosophical tradition from the last three centuries from Western thinking.

The nietzschean proclamation was in the first time an announcement of metaphysics' death. What had been died is the reality of an new order of existence. According to Martin Buber, the death of God meant

that only the man has become unable to understand a reality independent from him and unable to have a relation with it, unable to represent it in images. With the death of God the metaphysical and theological fundament is not more a support for the ethics. Man believes in his own powers and acts responsibly, he is in the end a mature man. So it happened that the death of God has received a theological meaning as a restaurateur of theology, so called, the Christian atheism, and sometimes has received an atheistic meaning, as the death of a cultural or thinking system.

This transfer of the death of God in philosophy from theology and then back in theology raised the problem of definition of God's essence. Not the existence of God was a problem by this dark expression but his essence. The traditional concept of divine essence does not allow any contact with God. If God is affirmed to be essence from a totally different space, then it appears the necessity to conceive something from over that succeeds any reality and that means the impossibility to think it, the divine essence. Impossibility is a historical reality for Nietzsche. The unavailability to conceive or to reflect about divine essence led to such a proclamation, death of God, as the biggest event of modern history. Under this situation theology was obliged to renounce at God of philosophers as the most perfect being from over us. Nietzsche proclaims the death of God in the basis of inability to conceive God, the ego decides over the divine essence and we must put an end with this god. But for Nietzsche, the death of God means the openness of a new horizon for the infinity of God. The try to conceive God along with the perishables made the god of metaphysics perishable and by this God Himself disappears. God is death. Nobody has ever been succeeding to think God and the perishables together. The perishables disintegrate God. The conclusion of such an expression as the final expression of Theo-ontology consists in the impossibility of God to be thought because God cannot be thought in the context of the world and in its perishables. The expression cannot be thought as result. Discussion about death of God speaks about death only as image. It is the expression of an idea that cannot be more thought as God. God thought metaphysically seems to be rather disintegrated by his perfection, by his existence from man thought that God cannot exist exactly as the human. The existence of God offered by man became a peril for him. The incompatibility thesis between the reality of God and the perishables led to atheism.

The death of God Theology is the sign of a fundamental theological crisis and it is causal connection with Heidegger's criticism of onto-theology. The dark affirmation is readily embraced in the structure of metaphysics or other way said it has the moving towards this death of God. The metaphysics speaks about the highest being that bears the entire existence. Only in this way was possible to speak about a basis that transcends all the realities. Behind that was only the human intention to govern the entire reality. At this crisis a good contribution was given by Kantian thinking, no human thinking can succeed the limits of this observable world. The Reform focused so much the fall of man that it was not more possible for man to have a contact with God. The metaphysics is only the will of man that takes the place of God. According to its essence, the metaphysics is only a revolt against God. Man wants to rule over this reality, God, to change Him into an object under his rules. Because man makes God the biggest being, man degraded God as the ultimate reality. From here we can conclude that the death of this God is only the death of idolatry. In this perspective the death of God is a positive event as the end of God of philosophers that it is given now the possibility to experience the sacral world. The theologians of death of God theology have in aim a rejection of God of metaphysics and an acceptance of Jesus Christ. Their criticism aim to liberate the Christian faith from its derivation from different metaphysical systems. It was the recommendation from many theologians as God not to be more seen as the highest being because this God cannot be defended. Both Bishop Robinson and Paul Tillich considered the attack of atheism justified against such a god. Feuerbach, Nietzsche, Huxley were rather anti-theist than a-theists. They

wanted liberation of man from such a human projection. They wanted this god to eliminate. Langdon Gilkey from Chicago University considered the theology of death of God a rejection of classical theism. This theology, according to him, showed the view of point of a secularized theology within Christian theology in a time of an spiritual despair.

**1. Paul van Buren – God, a reality that cannot be verified.** Paul van Buren is one from American theologians who tried to interpret the Gospel in a secular way. Van Buren does not want to make the Gospel accessible to the others from outside but he seeks the secular meaning of the Gospel for the secular man who lives in the Church. If for Bonhoeffer the secular term means maturity, for van Buren secularization refers to a method of interpretations the Gospel to make it accessible to modern man. Van Buren is focused on a non-religious interpretation. He does not want to use the traditional formulations of the faith to save the faith but as a secular man, he wants to obtain an understanding of the faith. Bonhoeffer made the call and van Buren wanted to offer an answer using an analysis of the language of faith. At the same time, van Buren wants also an understanding of the word God which is put under the secular conditions but he succeeds to open the problem of God as a fundamental task of theology in a secular world. He eliminates the meaning of the word God and he accepts a Christology as a final norm of ethic life. The word God dies the death of thousands of qualification, is a dead word without any sense. The different positions till now could not contribute to an understanding of God's reality. He wants to discover for modern man the content of theological meaning that speaks about God's presence and his reality. Van Buren is sure that with the help of this method of language analysis from philosophy taken, could reach a reconstruction of kerygma and Christology. His aim is to make the Christian faith relevant toward secular Christians with an empirical education. He reduces the Christian faith only at what is empiric verified. What is common to all analytical tries is that the meaning of the word God is empty. God receives in the end the character of a code. The common sense of language analyses is that they all agree that God is a code. The old interpretations regarding God are fallen and the Christians from today they do not know from where to start speaking about God. Today, the affirmation of Nietzsche is better understood. Van Buren goes on and for him not only God is dead but in the basis of a modified theism but even the word God is dead. It can be observed how van Buren wants to stop discussion only at the empirical, human and historic realities. He focuses on the stories about Jesus Christ. The Gospel puts an accent on Jesus Christ who is present in the confessions of the church. From here he concludes that theology is preoccupied with this man who lived and died in Palestine. At this concrete history should make reference the method of language analysis. Van Buren remarks in the Gospels an accent on the freedom of Jesus Christ regarding the Judaic religion where he was born and regarding the Judaic theology. In this freedom Jesus recognizes the existence of God who was there, who lived totally among people and who renounced to himself till the death on the cross. It was a new freedom, nowhere met till that time and that touched the people. At the same time, the people have received it because they lived in it the deep of a love nowhere to meet. This freedom does not remain without result, it corrupts and calls the people toward the new life.

According to van Buren, the name of God can be avoid because it is ambivalent and can lead to error. It is only a proper name that characterizes the divine essence. Expressions as divine essence, absolute, transcendence avoid the difficulties instead to resolve them. Van Buren eliminates even the meaning of the word Father. The calls of Gospel's writers were only to look at the Father and to keep silence. Because independent by Jesus we cannot find a Father and the Father can be found only in Jesus. Van Buren equates Jesus with the Father and rejects any obedience of people and of Jesus to Father. The question about God receives an answer in the person of Jesus Christ. " Because we can have our model

from empirical experience that does not pretend trans-empiric formulas, we do not meet difficulties to find a replacing word for word God that can have a secular and empiric meaning. Words as love, freedom can help to a better secular understanding of the Gospel. What they must do is to offer credit to secularity able to offer an adequate language using the first person singular. According to van Buren's analysis the word God is dead because it cannot resist to empiric verification. As a consequence, God Himself is dead although it is not possible to speak about his dead in a full sense as it is not possible to speak about God meaningful. For van Buren there is no discourse about God full of sense. It is not talk about that the sense of the word God is eliminated but also the reality through him is eliminated. Van Buren remains exclusively at the talk about Jesus Christ and at the freedom to live for others, confessed by apostles. So it appears the talk about Jesus without God. It is observed that in the van Buren's reflections it is possible to speak not only about the death of God but also about his absence.

**2. Thomas J. J. Altizer: Radical kenosis of God.** Another understanding of God's absence is theology of death of God exposed by Thomas Altizer who wanted to offer an original theology. Thomas Altizer proposes an theological understanding of death of God and at the same time an answer at the absence of God. He does not equate the death of God with the incapacity of man to believe in God and he does not see this death of God as lose of God from culture that tries to avoid talking about the presence of God. According to him, the death of God does mean neither silence nor incapacity of a language or of affirmations about God. In his case is not talk about an attack over metaphysics or against religion where God is considered dead. Religion appears for him only as a foreign reality and it manifests before man only as a reality in opposition. This affirmation, the death of God is put in connection with the incarnation. This is the fundament for such an affirmation. This proclamation comes from Christian faith. The death of God comes from Christian confession regarding the real incarnation of Jesus Christ that took place in time. The one who is incarnated is the Spirit and the total kenosis speaks about him. The Spirit has accepted the human form. From this total kenosis it is arrived to the death of God as real presence of Christ in the world. Altizer makes a difference between the event of God's death in Jesus Christ and the event happened in our days. The Spirit empties itself continuously during the event of incarnation. Incarnation is a metamorphosis of God that has not yet touched the end. The death of God happens everywhere in the world where He is present by negation its origins.

Incarnation means annulment of transcendence or the process of becoming immanent. The religious cult proposes a return to original experience of sacred, a return to origins to repair the fall under sin. According to Altizer is sustained a permanent incarnation, a permanent moving of the Spirit towards flesh. Christianity goes only on. That theology that understands incarnation in a radical way and keep this process forever, it cannot talk more about God. After such an understanding is not more possible to give to God the attributes of eternity, unchangeability, passivity and unmoving. God is in this movement and the old forms are put aside. The kenotic incarnation knows only one movement, forward and not a back movement toward origins. The incarnation and kenosis are translated through a negation of transcendence of God. By his coming in the world, God is negated dialectically, and in the death on the cross dies the God of the Old Testament. God annihilates himself in the moment when Jesus left the heaven and came on the earth to bear the cross. Altizer reproaches to traditional theology that it did not accept the total incarnation. The God of a traditional theology seems to be impassible. Altizer considers that by emptiness of God in profane, in the world, and in the history there is no more kept a world separated by God but God Himself comes to the same unity with the world in the process towards future. The radical affirmation of profane is the single way to accelerate the coming of a higher stance where the profane and the sacred will coincide in a new synthesis. God has emptied himself in this man in the world by a total

incarnation. What remains is only history, temporality, process. This event from history where we are is called by Altizer, the death of God. It is noteworthy at Altizer that the death is happened by two times: once with the death of Christ on the cross, God himself dies regarding the transcendent, his death begins with the incarnation, the second, when by theology is understood a God who cannot be understood, expressed, an empty form without life.

**3. Dorothee Sölle: a mediated God.** Another representative of this theological trend was Dorothee Sölle who wanted a serious talk about God. Her reflections were against an empty discussion about God and non-affirmations about God but also against a God who was absent from theological discourse. Under the influence of Hegel, Dorothee Sölle tries to reach a theology that is not an immature theology but a mature one that it can mediate God to a world without God. Hegel pushed Dorothee to pretend a theology a mature theology and from him she lent the kind of death of God theology. The loss of a religious conscience and of God from different theological systems means for her the end of a period of an immature stance. She pays attention to Hegel's endlessly pain of the loss of mediated God: "this pain discovers the truth about the death of God. No voice is calling us from heaven. God cannot be read easily in newspapers, announcement, statistics so was the bush under fire". She seeks a reconciliation between the theistic religious position (There is God ) and the atheistic religious position ( God is dead ): God will be. But this reconciliation will include the absence of unmediated God and the absence of mediated God historical in the world without God. He thinks that theology must let the unconditional to be read in conditional and in this way is let an conditional access to God. For Dorothee, the unconditional is mediated in the history but not as a coming in immanence from transcendence. Such a God does not more appear as the biggest Being, as a super-natural existence.

Dorothee Sölle pays attention to the text from phil. ( 2, 5-11 ). To be one with Father does not mean that they share the same essence but only in an existential way, as existence of God. The premise of the same substantiality is destroyed. Nobody can empty to another nature. What remains for Dorothee Sölle is the total mediation of God. The term plays a big role in her reflections, *Stellvertretung*. She put the term in connection with the loss of unmediated God. Regarding the substitution of Jesus Christ, what Nietzsche has called the death of God ... in reality is talk about the death of his non-mediation, the death of a non-mediated form, the dilution of an exposition of God. That is why Jesus has not contradicted the meaning of Nietzsche's word about the death of God in a way of a naïve conscience about God. The death of God as a theological reality or as absence of God appears for her as a impossibility of an unmediated theism, as impossibility of an unmediated religious conscience which leaves the theistic position and characterizes the end of religion there where God is not more necessary as hypothesis. Dorothee Sölle observes in traditional and classic theology an absence of Christology and she put it back on the basis of the death of God. For this, Christ plays the role of a substitution, representative of God.

The death of God for Dorothee Sölle has this meaning: God must be represented. The concept of representation starts from the idea that God is not absent in the time we live, that God in this time cannot be experienced unmediated. By this concept, representation-substitution, Dorothee Sölle wants to bring in centre Christology. Christology is connected with the absence of God. If God would have been present unmediated, the Christ would have lost its function. By this concept, representation-substitution, she wants to obtain an access to God, even if He is absent. The death of God does not have for Dorothee Sölle a literal meaning but it is so expressed the possibility of an access to God, its mediation, unmediated understanding of God. The death of God is in connection with his representation-substitution. She invites the believer to experience both realities: the death of God and Christ as representative. After Christ leaving, the substitution is made by his friends and brothers. This is the real representation of God in the

world. Christ is present everywhere where a believer works and suffers for God. The Christian is a forerunner for God as Christ was. Love represents God who is absent in the world. God himself is mediated among brothers in the world. In the beginning, Christ is identified with others. The identification with others coincides with the identification with God and in this way God is revealed in our history and world. God is identical not with himself but with the others and in this consist actually his absence. God is absent, he is hidden in the venture of becoming human. The worldly existence of God is his hidden existence. She tried through Christian atheism to respond to atheism.

**4. Conclusions of death of God Theology.** All those who spoke about the death of God theology left the idea that the center of theology was diluted. What is left now in theology and with a dead god there is no more any forward way. The man remains only with an historical Jesus: a great man with some good ideas and much courage as others like him. God is no more the One who touches people vitally and from this reason He is not dead but man is dead. Because God is dead, the agape is dropped and so the man is dead, too. Maynard Kaufman suggests that the death of God in the contemporaneous theology is caused by a deep illness in Christology, so to say, it was registered a collapse in Christology. This collapse from Christology consist in the fact that God did not reveal himself in Jesus Christ on the one hand, and on the other hand Jesus Christ did not more revel the Father but he revealed only what means to be human into a profane world. His teaching and his life did not direct man towards God but towards some human capacities, freedom, responsibility and authentic existence. Jesus Christ and God were two incompatible each other realities. The moving had gone on a way from an religious experience towards a collapse regarding God. Man has remained without a reveled and present God.

This topic of death of God or absence of God had as starting point the impossibility of a talk about God or of a theological discussion about God where the word *God* was an inadequate word. The meaning of the word God was superior to human thinking and understanding and from this reason God could not be defined. The science did not need Him as reference or reality to legitimate its affirmations. Classic theology and metaphysics had met this objection and the radical theology that tried to offer a new way of seeing and speaking about sacred does not succeed to legitimate a theological language. That is why, the sacred becomes profane totally and in this way we can make affirmations about it, or it is total absent. No one from these two positions make affirmations about God. With other words, we live in a time where there is no space for God even in our language. From this reason theology was in a situation to leave the position because its subject was questionable. God and his reality had to be expressed in another way or to find another starting point. Revelation and Christology were two realities separated by each other in classical theology: " No one has ever seen God; the son, the only begotten made Him known " – John ( 1, 18 ), " God spoke us through his son " - Hebrew ( 1,2 ). This was the point for entire theology and God who could not be expressed because He could not be thought becomes accessible to our thinking. The humanity of Jesus Christ is extremely relevant for the sense of word God. There is no wondering that Barth pays attention to fields, revelation and Christology. He puts together the two fields but in his thinking God does not revels himself in Jesus only as hidden. His accent on the revelation of God in Jesus had as aim to legitimate the theological talk about God. It was no wondering that some protestants theologians critic the contemporaneous arrogance regarding entire Christian tradition and the traditional mode of speaking about God. According to Eberhard Jungel, the one who will make such a return to traditional way it will find new ways to legitimate theology. In a theological understanding, God is revealed only in the basis of his revelation. What is revealed by Jesus Christ comes from God. The western tradition was jeopardized to think God separated from Jesus Christ, The Incarnated God.

The death of God indicates a style in contemporaneous philosophy and theology which must be anti-metaphysic and moral, able to save theology from collapse. The idea of an absolute God from modern western thinking has produced the supreme opposition of God regarding man. It was proved that this idea was very sensible for modern thinking and in the end it was reached the dark expression, death of God. ” The death of God ” theology tried to defeat this aporia not only rejecting this idea of absolute but even this god. The metaphysics has perfected itself as a philosophy of death of God and a rejection of atheism was only possible by defeating theism which was a presupposition of modern metaphysic.

It was not an accident that the theological word of Dorothee Sölle, a student of Gogarten, had as theme the critic of theism that this critic was raised at the level of a theological axiom. Karl Barth had noticed that this criticism was rooted in Christian faith and he understood that he must get a new formulation of the concept of God. So, the affirmation of death of God has become a partner in dialog for theology and it has as aim to simplify theology. A serious implication in the death of God theology gave birth to perils for theological talk. Theology had to be involved first in the critic against theism to avoid the absurdity of death of God. There is no separation between the theologians who support the absence of God and the theologians who support the death of God theology. They share the same reality. They only wanted to defeat the crisis from theology, to defend theology against atheism, they wanted only an more exactly localization of God and not over there but here in the secular human life. The reject of religion and by this the reject of liturgical acts of the Church was necessary to establish God here and not over there.

All these theologians have demonstrated that man needs God; they searched modes of thinking God and of expressing to validate the theological truth. They have not renounced at the idea of God and from this reason it was affirmed in sociology that the thesis from secularization were contradicted. Man has not ever renounced at the idea of God as it was hoped practically by those who were negating the existence and the reality of God. There was a sign of crisis in theology and these theologians tried to answer, not only to those who were interested in the Christian life, but also against the attacks from different fields. The secularization did not mean that man has renounced at the reality of God. It pushed theology, specially, the protestant theology to give up at a super-natural world. In the centre of discussion it was the image of God. God was too far away from man and it was sought a formulation of his presence in the human life. Secularization has refused to renounce at theology. It wanted to put an accent on existentialist affirmations, on the analyses that touch the human feelings able to offer the place of meeting with God. Only in the domain of existentialist relations could be met God. The death of God had in centre deconstructions of classic theism. The concept of the death of God meant a relocation of theological discourse and at the same time it led at a questioning that discourse.

## **II Theology in Postmodernism of Post-Metaphysical Theology**

### **Rediscovering the theological sense in post-modernism**

For many centuries, secularism has defined and built the world. It is a world where theological was discredited or seen only as a private problem. Even from the beginnings of secular manifestations of modernity it was felt the fear regarding a missing fundament. Today, the logic of secularism is broken. By

a digital voice it was proclaimed the lacking of values and of a sense. The postmodern theology has not accepted a baptize of nihilism in the name of a negative theology wrong understood but it seeks to rebuild the theological truth with the aim to put the nihilism aside through an harmonious, interpersonal and infinite order. The philosophical postmodern theology has offered itself to help the life of faith as theology generally speaking aspires to be seen as faith seeking understanding and not security. According to Graham Word postmodernism defines a critical position against modernism understood as iconoclasm.

A first work which treated about postmodernism appertained to Jean François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* -1979. It has fallen under discussion if postmodernism as condition can help theology to recuperate or it is ready a good for Christian faith. From the beginning it was seen that postmodernism is a return from modernism. For others, postmodernism has meant that theology should not work more under the condition of modernism. From this point of view, one from the condition of postmodernism was to liberate theology. Or better said, postmodernism is a theological condition. Postmodernism is not what comes after modernism but it means the annulment of the new category which is waited by modernism. The modern transcendentalism cut the discourse from its theological roots not simply forgetting God but thinking God in such a way that God does not matter anymore. But it has never realised its task. For post modernity, religion is not simply a form of primitive life imposed by politics and ethics. Religious continues to appear in a sacrificial form. The postmodernism thinkers are looking now a space for a religious talk and they went on to a restoration of religious voice. The experience of impossible that was forbidden by method, the succeeding of limits, reflection upon is not able to be reflected, restoration of the good name of impossible which was declared impossible by the old Enlightenment, the apology of impossibility became again realities under study and analysis. Lyotard in his work defines postmodernism as a lost faith in meta discourses: the postmodern condition is based on unbelieving meta narrations. The great narrations have lost their credibility. The rationality of postmodernists is based on narrations. Rationality is all the time situated in narrations, traditions, institutions and particular practices. Postmodernism agrees with Nietzsche, God – the highest being – became unbelievable. By post from postmodernism is not understood a back return, a looking back which would speak about a repetition but this post implies a procedure of analyze, anamnesis, anagogic and anamorphozes, which elaborates an initial forgetting. As a negation of an immediate presence of senses or realities, post-modernism means a critic of metaphysics. From the beginning, postmodernism has manifested itself as a strong rejection of Descartes' thinking. Postmodernism is a critic of onto-theology. Destruction of this religion of metaphysics or onto-theology became a loyal partner of purified faith from a total idolatry.

Jean Luc Marion is one of those who hoped to appear a real faith after the twilight of the idols. Because under the conceptual names of God are only metaphysical idols, the death of God refers exclusively at the fall of the metaphysical concepts about God. Leaving all what was called metaphysics, it was permitted God's appearance liberated by onto-theology. Shortly, the death of God implies the death of the death of God. His theology is seen post metaphysical, using the distinction between idol and icon. Jean Luc Marion observed in his book, *God without being*, that all what is happening in art, religion, philosophy and thinking is a cleaning of temples by the last vestiges of conceptual idolatry. The postmodern condition is one of a life among the ruins of fallen idols, especially those of isms. It is possible to say that postmodernism annulets the conceptual idolatry with task to make space for faith. Post metaphysical theology sought to liberate the own revelation of Christian God by any precondition and any determination of human thought and language, by the language of Being that dominated western metaphysics and its ontological conception about God as supreme being. The centre of theological vision of Marion is formed by the divine names and by mystical theology of Dionysus. The highest name for

Marion cannot be found in predication about being or essence but rather in the theological hymnology of love shared by God those beings able to love. Marion replaces being with the love as gift. Marion is convinced that using the term love instead of being we have a smaller chance to fall in idolatry when we meet God as shared love, as agape. If the God of metaphysics is a God that must exist in the manner of a human conceptualization as a rational concept about what God is, the Christian God according to Marion is a God who donates Himself generously not to be proved rationally or conceptually understood but rather a God who is received in the love of contemplation and of prayer, in the life of liturgy. The god of metaphysics who tries to answer to conditions of conceptual thinking is not more the God of religious practice or the God of the real faith. For this reason, for Marion's project the death of God announced by Nietzsche plays an important role. The death of God has meant the death of all concepts about God and so it is offered a real theological permission. The God of onto-theology, according to Marion, is equivalent with the idol.

With the help of Dionysus, Marion developed a theory of non-predicative discourse as single discourse adequate to God which put aside the entire predication. The theological language could not affirm something about God but only the hymnology addressed to God. From this reason, Marion sustains that the function of theological language cannot be theoretical, philosophical or metaphysical but rather pragmatic, *theo-logical* and liturgical. The post metaphysic theology signalizes the movement from being at existence to love as gift what means that the predication must produce hymnology. And because theology must be celebrated before to be written, it must begin with the prayer. When predication has its origin in prayer and culminates in hymnology, it is less possible to be captured by the will of intellectual power in the service of logos which has not become body and it has not lived among us.

According to David Tracy, the modernist theologies were principally determined not by the reality of God but from the logos of modernity. Hans Fries agrees with him: the modes of modern interpretations have eclipsed the specificity of biblical narrations and at the same time the unique myth of Jesus Christ. So the modern theologians have conquered the academic respect and of cultural plausibility. The modern theological systems as the others isms have left Whole Other unthought-of. According to David Tracy: Theology will never indicate a totality. The Christian theology is the voice of the Other through the voice of others who tested it. Infinity is discovered in kenotic reality of Jesus Christ. Graham Word is convinced that God in postmodernism appears in the storm of nihilism and behind the masks imposed by secular modern theology. In the postmodern cultural climate theology can appear again, the secular thinking has been encouraged to think differently.

Recently, a new direction has appeared in the variety of theological thought which has manifested against immanence to save the transcendent. The Radical Orthodoxy has affirmed as real postmodern theology especially by its critics against secular modernity as violent and atheistic. Through Orthodoxy makes reference directly at an engagement regarding Christian faith and patristic modes. It is talk about a richer Christianity and more coherent which was lost progressively at the end of the Middle Age and which goes over the boundaries of Protestantism and Catholicism. Radical Orthodoxy bears the confession that only theology can defeat metaphysics. Radical speaks about a return at the patristic roots and at a re-evaluation and rethinking of Christian tradition. The conclusion of Radical Orthodoxy is simple: modernism is not good and the deconstruction of postmodernism ends up in nihilism because it accepts the basis presupposition of modernity. Radical Orthodoxy makes appeal at postmodern critics but avoiding the nihilistic conclusions and at the same time offers understanding toward postmodern philosophy and its work. The conservative and traditionalist theologians have used deconstruction with the aim to get a purified theology.

The postmodern theology has begun a move from words to signs. And this was the end of western metaphysics theology, according to Carl A. Raschke. Radical Orthodoxy reminds us that there is another language: Trinity, Jesus Christ, hypostatic union, resurrection, church, Holy Spirit, creation from nothing, transubstantiation of gifts. Returning secularism towards theological premises annulated we can be healed from death where we are invited by secularism with its forms, religious and spirituals. There are signs of a postmodern sensibility which pretend a theological understanding and by this is characterized the significance and possibilities for a theological postmodern thinking.

The work of Mark Taylor, *Erring*- 1984, was a manifesto for a postmodern deconstructive theology deep influenced by radical theology and by Derrida's thinking. He himself acknowledge: "deconstruction is the hermeneutic of the death of God. God who died is the god of classic theism: the prim origin, the ultimate reality, transcendent and eternal. This god is involved in the ontological understanding of total presence. The postmodernist theology acknowledges that it cannot more work with the category of Enlightenment. Nietzsche announced the death of God of Modernism and by this he announced his final work of the project of modernity but also the postmodernism which will become the dominant cultural force. God's projection as being means projection of one who can be declared dead and means simultaneously the creation of an object which is over. Theology as Christian philosophy appertains to metaphysics. The affirmation "God is dead" speaks about the God of metaphysics, not of the faith. Thinking God as being has meant imposing of limits on God. The fall of this metaphysic God was announced for the first time by Pascal who observed that the god of philosophers was not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When Nietzsche announced the death of God it was clear that something important has been changed in the form of dominant life of West.

One of the recent themes from postmodern theology and philosophy was the return of religion but is talk about religion without religion. John D. Caputo sees this situation as a passion after God, saving the name of God, a capacity to think God without forgetting the conditions of postmodern sensibility. The work of John D. Caputo that was much remarked is entitled *the prayers and the tears of Jacques Derrida: religion without religion*, work that guided the theological reflections within a postmodern theological secular space. Derrida does not think God as an object of theological analyses. The God of Derrida is given only in prayers and in cry. Derrida is interested only in the eyes covered by tears of sorrowful, tears of a deep imploration. He prefers a theology without theology, a religion without religion. For him, theology is not an onto-theological doctrine of presence. Derrida in his thinking proves to be practical. He proposes to be talked about God starting from a practice or after a practice. It is talk about prayer or about the experience of prayer. In his analyses he starts from Dionysus's reflections about prayer: the prayer is addressed to the other as the other, so to say, to God. The addressing to God is under the form of prayer; the prayer is associated with the hymnology and it is not an act of reflection. The prayer implies nothing more then the call towards the other, asking to offer its promised presence as the other, and finally his transcendence as the Other, without any determination. This is too the God of Marion, "God without Being". He writes about the God of faith who was left under silence by Heidegger. He tried a relocation of theological discourse based in Revelation and in the ecclesiastical interpretation, without metaphysical preoccupation.

The liturgical domain is not left aside but it plays a big role in postmodernism. Jean Ives Lacoste is remarked for postmodern thinking by his work, *Experience and Absolute*. His work above mentioned argues against modern evaluation of religious experience and it defends that God can be known only as one who can be loved. The crazy man after God does not negate the morality has eschatological implications. He wants to exist only at the liturgical mode without renouncing at the world. The liturgy

subordinates the worldly existence before God and the liturgical act is fulfilled as many as the human being makes its prayer. Jean Ives Lacoste reminds that the ethics has a liturgical status and the ethical prerogatives are inseparable by political duties. Liturgy does neither bring man before the Absent or before The Whole Other and nor transmits man the in one day this absence will be fulfilled but it speaks man about an eschatological reality or about an eschatological proximity.

The act of prayer receives a especially attention from Jean Louis Chretien, philosopher, theologians, phenomenologist, today teacher of history of philosophy of Middle Ages in Paris. His thinking takes part at what was called by Dominique Janicaud, "The theological return of French phenomenology". For Chretien" the excess" is resulted from a meeting of man with God. He speaks about this surplus as something that leaves traces. The work" The Wounded Word" makes part from a collection entitled Phenomenology and the Theological Turn: The French Debate, where Chretien makes an analysis of the act of prayer. What is noteworthy is that the author does not make an analysis or a psychological describing of the act of prayer but he assumes the understanding of prayer from those who are practicing it seriously, from the Church Fathers. His aim was to demonstrate the there is a phenomenology of prayers. The prayer is a proper manifestation before God, both collective and individual. Chretien does not see the prayer as a monolog or as act of talking without any trace. The word of prayer affects and touches the one who makes the prayer. This is the first touch of the word. The prayer is the mode how man is returning towards God, praying. Who is praying is doing the prayer to teach itself how to make the prayer and he understands the prayer as the gift from God. The truth of prayers cannot be reduced at theological predicative affirmations which assert our presuppositions.

New changed perceptions appear in the social theories. An example in this sense is the work of John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason and The Word Made Strange* -1997. By these two works is affirmed the importance of Christianity in the social secular life. Milbank considers that the transformation realized by Christianity can bring an improvement of humanity.

New characters are registered in describing the new society. The term of community seems to be more and more present in postmodernist reflections, with the same characteristics as those from Christian communities. It is well known now that the human being is subject fundamentally social and that the empty from human life cannot be filled by abundance but rather by the relations with the others. Another characteristic of community is the accent on the person whose identity is given by community which plays a crucial role in the formation of its members. George Stroup sustains too the relation between the human person and the community by identity offered by community to human person. The personal identity is not a private reality but it has a common element; it is formed by the community where the person partakes. The narrations are constitutive for communities and empowered by sacramental practices. According to Stephen Grunlan and Marvin Mayers such rituals bring the community together, empower the solidarity of the group and strengthen the engagement toward the prerogatives of the group.

The condition of post modernity is neither philosophical nor socio-politics but spiritual, a condition where the faith and the way of life come together in the form of an incarnated spirit. The life in the Heavenly Royal is liturgical, say Lacoste and Pickstock.

**2. Deconstruction in theology: The wish of impossible and method against conceptual idolatry. How to avoid speaking the name of God?** Deconstruction is not a theory that says that you can do with text what you want to mean. Derrida insists that "deconstruction is neither philosophy nor a method, it is not a stage, a period or a moment. It is something that all the time is at work and it was at work before

we observe that deconstruction has begun.” According to Derrida, deconstruction is happened to texts, ideas and systems. Hesitate is the condition of deconstruction in the sense of condition of possibility. The deconstruction is the possibility of question or of reformulation or of a deeper knowledge. From a technical view of point, according to Derrida, deconstruction is not a method. At the same time, deconstruction is not characterized by a skeptical, relativist and nihilist vision. But deconstruction presupposes a weak and wrong reading of the texts. Deconstruction wants to be all right with the text, so to say, to offer justice to the texts and from this reason appears as a method of interpretation. Derrida’s aim was to recuperate the biblical tradition by deconstruction. In an essay by Rico Sneller about Derrida it is underlined its strategy very nice:” I think that Derrida wants to renew the traditional discourse about God. The renewed discourse is not about God as an object but about God as a linguistic phenomenon, existential, performing. God means relation, play together, interaction between outside and inside, even co-relation. ” But it is not so easy to rebuild biblical God through a deconstruction of a god or of gods. Deconstruction must not be equate with negative theology, because negative theology is bound forever by hyper essentialism, the biggest affirmation about God or of a god over god.

For Derrida the experience of impossible is the worst definition of deconstruction. Deconstruction is a dream and a wish of something that is wholly other, of something that shakes the present horizons of possibilities, is the arriving of the other, of somebody we have not seen come, which come as a surprise and brakes our limits. Deconstruction invites and offers hospitality. For Derrida it is interesting the impossible, and not the logic and absolute one. Resuming, in deconstruction, the simple conditions of impossibility are becoming conditions of possibility. Deconstruction is not the final nail in the coffin of the old God but it means the affirmation of religious. Deconstruction is structured as a religion without religion and this is its mode to go through the critic of religion offered by modernism. Deconstruction is a religion within the limits what was declared outside of the limits by the old Enlightenment. It was hoped as deconstruction to finish the work begun by the critics of religion from the XIX centuries when by their faith in science and objectivism they have permitted as God’s place to be taken by man or science. Deconstruction of presence, as disappointment for secular deconstructions, does not negate the presence of God but rather critics the idols of presence, more in relation with the lamentations of Moshe and Nietzsche.

Deconstruction and mystical theology shares the same faith that there is no concept to reach the presence, the significance of a reveled reality. But in mystical theology this hinder is put aside all the time through an excess. Deconstruction does not deconstruct owing to an excess of the gift but it talk about an excess of human intuition before of reveled reality which is never reduced to an object. Deconstruction deconstructs or critics rather the concepts where the experience is declared impossible or irrational. Both mystical theology and philosophy agree with deconstruction. An experience of impossible is not identical with that of possibility. To have an experience of impossibility means to have an experience of impossible. Postmodernism is put in relation with the death of God: ” Because metaphysics touched the end, the god of metaphysics has touched the end. Metaphysics touched the end because the concept of God has been proved to be inoperative; God has lost the function and his place. The identification of the death of God with the end of metaphysics means that this death is restricted at the metaphysical concept about God. God is death when God is identified with causa sui.

It could be hard to image Nietzsche as a spiritual mentor for its abilities to detect idols but he is the one who denounces almost the entire western philosophical tradition as idolatrous. According to Nietzsche, the philosophers tried to undermine the place of God and to retake the control over the world. The phenomenology at it rand ( Levinas and Marion ) sustained the same project of denunciation the

conceptual idolatry. "The death of God" for Nietzsche means the death of an idol that could not die actually because it has never lived. For Heidegger, the death of God of philosophers put an end to the project of metaphysics and it has opened the possibility for theology to be liberated after all from philosophical captivity becoming so a true faith. Applauding these two, Nietzsche and Heidegger, Marion sustains the possibility of a revelation which is really transcendent, a Logos liberated by any philosophical logos. The end of metaphysics or of the death of God is a reason for celebration and not at all of despair. Marion agrees that Nietzsche's god is an idol because it responds perfectly to the metaphysical definition based on Descartes' analysis. He suggests that the Nietzschean concept of death of God can offer help to the end of metaphysics. From this reason, Nietzsche appears as a positive figure who helped at defeating of metaphysical idolatry. Marion sees all the endeavors to prove the existence of God ending with a failure because they can offer only a concept of God and the correspondence of this concept with who God is, it is missing and it cannot be demonstrated. Marion does not equate the concept of God with its essence.

The notion of conceptual idol or philosophic is not new. In the scripture of New Testament there is a caveat not only for usual idolatry but also for conceptual idolatry, as seen I John ( 5, 21 ) and Col. ( 2,8 ), identifies by Apostle Paul with false philosophy or with human learning. The text from Col ( 2, 8 ) has the structure of an idol which is empty and it wants to take the place of God or of the revealed teaching of Christ. For Apostle Paul not the human tradition is suspect but the fact that this one is seen as divine. The conceptual idolatry separates the believer from real God and it represents at the same time a construction of a false god. It is nothing more than a product of own imagery. According to Nietzsche, the philosophical traditional concepts are nothing more than idols in the sense that they are images of our creation. Nietzsche himself argues against such a fundament which ends in nihilism. That is the reason for which Lyotard defines the postmodernism as no trust towards Meta narrations. For Nietzsche the death of God has many meanings but the sense that was taken by theologians of postmodernism and it discovered Nietzsche as God Seeker, was that one about the God of Philosophers.

This is the highest concept of philosophy or simply a philosophical creation and even the philosophers hard believe in such a God. Certainly, because this concept has content less precious, the death of God of philosophers does not represent a big loss. Or, went on, it has been affirmed with more courage that the death of this God has represented rather a gain. Because this god is only an idol, it had to die. The proclamation of the death of God has as meaning only the death of an idol or of an ideology. The death of the idol was the moment of happiness for possibility of the life of icon. Levinas focused with this kind of idolatry which substitutes the images of God. The philosophy has intentioned to impose a logos over the world, it tried to put the world within a schema. What is underlined by Levinas is that this schema looks like me. Levinas wants to be free by the philosophical logos that try to control the reflection about God. As a Talmudic searcher, Levinas rejects any images of God according to Moshe who receives from God the single answer about His identity, I am.

Husserl in his work, *Logical Investigation*, speaks about *pure phenomenology of experience of thinking and of knowledge* where by word pure wants to express the liberation from metaphysical propositions, scientifically and psychological. The aim of such thinking is to escape by conceptual idolatry. If the idols are defined as concepts or entities after our likeness then they are only idols. All seems to be according to my thinking or at least bears my stamp. Heidegger in his work, *Identity and Difference*, in section *The Onto-Theological Constitution of Metaphysics* translates the god of philosophy or metaphysics as idol. Metaphysics is theology, an affirmation about God because the divinity enters into philosophy. God serves as the final entity in the chain of beings. He is *causa prima, causa sui*. "Divinity can enter into

philosophy only as philosophy, with its own agree and by its own nature, it asks for and determinates divinity and how it enters in philosophy. ” If Heidegger identifies God in his critics as the highest ideas or the sum of all realities, Feuerbach observes god as projection of all qualities at the highest level. So, the end of chain made by beings is the man. Not only that the man is the creator of God but the limits impose over God are given by the human thinking. According to Marion, as he says in his work *God without Being*, Nietzsche did for Christians a big service because he alerted against idols. To think God as Supreme Being, as a normal being, God will become encircled in metaphysics, characterized by mutual fundament of being. It is talk about the God of philosophers, a god who is limited by the human discourse, a god who dies. Marion insists that any real discussion about God could not be metaphysical because any metaphysical discussion would be a discussion about an idol and not about God.

Marion explains how the idol offers the divine and makes it available to vision or to human understanding. Astonishing the look and allowing to rest on it, the idol returns the look back at the one who looks giving him an invisible mirror. The idol offers to my view an exact measure for my look. Marion wants to find an adequate language for God where God is not object. Not only the idols are made by we but we are reflected in them. Instead to be a window towards over there, they act as a mirror. In idol we think that we see God but actually we see ourselves. Although Feuerbach judged wrong God when he says that it is a simple human projection, its description characterizes an idol. Marion accepts such a characterization; it is the man who is the original model of its idol. As Image or icon, incarnation in the visible body, of invisible God, Christ must serve as a norm of invisible God, an impossible gift of God. The faith is the gift to have the eyes to see the unseen grace. For Derrida, the messianic icon is described more darkened, which is waited, unimagined, which is never given. It is only waited, the one who will come. The expression *it is not yet come* it is the mode to wait opened its waiting, to keep the faith alive in something impossible. The gift of faith for Derrida means a faith in the gift where the faith means that we do not have the eyes to see the impossible. Derrida does not attack the negative theology but he considers deconstruction different by it. For him the negative theology is not an accident; he does not undermine negative theology but he prefers a translation of it. The modality to translate negative theology is made with the aim to save the name of God. Marion sustains the mystical theology which is preferred before negative theology. For Marion, deconstruction and mystical theology seems to do the same service, to deconstruct the metaphysics of presence whiles for Derrida, mystical theology seems to pinch from deconstruction its service. Marion does not equate deconstruction with mystical theology but he sustains that the deconstructive element is ready at work in mystical theology. Mystical theology does not forbid the access at the presence of God but it sustains the raise of God’s name over any name in the earth or on in the heaven. For Derrida, mystical theology is hyper essentialism, not a negation but a hyper affirmation of being or of presence, a economy where nothing is lost. For Marion hyper essentialism is identical with the metaphysics of presence. He does not reject the metaphysics of presence constituted by affirmations and negations. He wants the third way, that of de-nomination because it has the form of non nomination. Derrida remains only at the two modes of thinking, affirmation and negation and for him mystical theology appertains to affirmation. Starting with the method of Dionysus, for Marion the third way of non-nomination succeeds both negation and affirmation; it represents a final possibility that transcends the two extremes of metaphysics, affirmation and negation. Non nomination succeeds the nomination expressed negatively or affirmatively, it goes over there or succeeds the nomination. The third way of Marion, non-nomination, represents a qualitative change which succeeds the sphere of predication; the affirmations and the negations are limited. De-nomination is for Marion more pragmatic then the others two modes. By pragmatic, Marion wants to say: ” When the name of God is used in mystical theology is not used to predict something about God, to determine what God is but simply, to

refer to God and to praise Him. This is the point of difference between Derrida and Marion. Derrida recognizes the presence of predication in mystical theology, in praise and hymnology. From this reason he uses the expression *The Wholly Other*. Marion rejects Derrida's opinion about the presence of predication in prayer and in praise based on the fact that no predication or name could name adequately God. To say that God is good, for Marion this affirmation appertains to the pragmatic domain of praise and or pure reference, there is no logical predication. To confess that God cannot be known is not a failure from knowledge but it is another mode of knowledge where what is known about God is only his incomprehensibility. What we know about God conceptually, it is not God. Marion observes that this practice of divine names is used in the practice of baptism: "Baptize them in my Name" means according to Gregory of Nyssa that this name is not a predicate through the essence of God is circumscribed in the horizon of knowledge but rather we are circumscribed in the name that is not named of God. In mystical theology, the aim is not to reduce the name of God to presence but to keep silence about that name for we to be baptized in the Name. The name of God is not a name to be said but heard. The name is not said but it calls. With the insistence that the name is absent from concept what Marion calls de-nomination keeps the donation of God safely from metaphysics of presence. Derrida does not love so much mystical theology but he prefers rather messianic terminology where God is never reached, precisely because the name of God is what we love and wish, because we cry and pray, something wholly other, which is not present. It is not only talk about conceptuality but also as non-donation. The God of Marion is donated by donation, while for Derrida is talked about dry and desert. Derrida does not agree with God's donation because it is equivalent with presence, the name of God is neither donation nor present but forever its name is at future, He will be, come.

### **3. Phenomenology and Theology**

From the beginning, Marion establishes the relation between theology and phenomenology. The aim of his project is the possibility to talk about the phenomenon of revelation. He tries to articulate a phenomenology that allows him to talk about religious experience or more exactly about an experience of divine revelation within of terms of phenomenology. Marion seeks a new kind of language able to articulate a thought about God and about religious phenomenology within philosophy. Relation between phenomenology and theology is proved by Marion by the fact that he wants to describe the theological task from a phenomenological point of view, through the experience expressed by theologian in a phenomenological way. Marion does not separate the two discourses because meanwhile he speaks about prayer, praise toward God, baptism, his accent is phenomenological: the withdraw of knowledge, the nomination received from God, the third way of eminence that succeeds the others two (affirmative and negative). Marion, speaking about the Name or about the nominations or about the possibilities to name God, starts from patristic where is present mystical theology away to be the same with the metaphysics of presence but it appears also the phenomenology as result of liturgical act, of the dialog with God. And the result is not one theoretical but it is talk about a pragmatic theology of absence but not of God but of Name. The phenomenon presents itself as a saturated phenomenon and it succeeds the concept which wants to be the name of God. Phenomenology underlines so incomprehensibility of God but also the excess that forbids the conceptualization of God.

Theology is given by prayer, by the dialog with God and phenomenology is given by result (result of prayer, of dialog with God, the absence of Name). The Name remains anonymous but the impact is registered by prayer or by the praise toward the One who remains anonymous. Phenomenology is

preoccupied with the precise sense of appearance, with the structure of phenomenology rather than with the objective appearance of reality. It put aside the causal reality and adheres at e descriptive narration without the pressure of husserlian theory of conscience and of cognitive primate. In the case of the Scripture phenomenology focuses on the sense of faith that could move the mountains rather than to ask about the metaphysical possibility, on the sense of the Good News from Angel Gabriel for Mather of God than whether the evangelist registered an actual historic episode. Phenomenology and theology are related because they share the same origin in the phenomenal of the event of lived experience and both of them try to articulate it. Their common experience is the given of lived experience that asks for a theological and phenomenological reduction. Marion argues that theology which is fundamental or philosophic is not immune at the critic of phenomenology because such a theology is based on real transcendence, causality, substantiality and actuality. The phenomenological character of phenomenon as basis of revealed theology appertains to theology itself. Phenomenology can think and express what theology owns. But to speak about God, it must speak about the God of Jesus Christ.

According to John D. Caputo the name of God means the possibility of impossible or the name of God is the Name of One who makes the impossibility possible. Both theological and phenomenological the possibility of impossible appears as the name of God. The experience of the impossible makes the experience of God possible. Putting aside the problem of pure and liberated donation, to reduce at the I, Manoussakis sustains the need of a relation for phenomenon to appear, relation related at the concept of person. He goes on: " the single modality to know God and the single modality for God to know me it is not as being, but as person, a person which I am in relationship. On the other hand I have seen that it is possible for God to appear in the experience of his look in me. In this way I have an experience of God as invisible look that sees me but it is not seen. Strictly speaking, God appears while remains invisible. He appears in me and only in me, God needs me as the other who can look and it is in relation with, God needs me as horizon to make possible his appearance. The human persona and each person is understood as the sacred place of epiphany of God. " The epiphany becomes the field of phenomenology or of appearance or of God's donation, or he names epiphany phenomenology or manifestation or appearance of God. To accept the gift means to be provoked as subject to be constituted by the other. The saturated phenomenon cannot be reduced anymore at the I who observes, it cannot be reduced as object but it leaves a trace in the witness. In the place of I think it would be I am touched, affected. This is the new figure or image of I, as passive recipient of phenomenon, as witness exposed to phenomenon, as one who benefits from this experience of saturated phenomenon. The conscience is formed by what is received. According to Marion, phenomenology could not think God as actuality but it is possible only to examine the possibility of the phenomenon of revelation, a phenomenon in relation with the immanence of God.

The phenomenological investigation has nothing to do with the evidences about God but with God as possible phenomenon, as donation given to intuition. This donation is radical, paradox of paradoxes, a saturated phenomenon. Both for theology and for phenomenology in investigation of revelation, according to Marion, the supreme figure is Christ incarnated who is an icon of God, (Being given). In the relation between phenomenology and theology it is not paid attention to the actuality of revelation but to its possibility. According to the principle of phenomenology it seeks to abrogate the condition of visibility just to receive the phenomenon purely, as it is given. So purified, phenomenology became what Marion calls the method of revelation and not a content of revelation but a way to open the possibility of an event without cause. Although Marion pretends that he focuses only on the possibility of Revelation, he goes on using the manifestation of Christ as supreme example of such saturated phenomenon. Marion underlies a phenomenology with space for revelation .... Just as result Marion does not pretend that Christ is the only

one saturated phenomenon possible: Christ is the saturated phenomenon, the possibility that is itself saturated by the possibilities of saturation. ” Marion does not show us God, he makes us sure that there is a space for God to be revealed”.

In the same sense speaks Michel Henry when he wants to speak about revelation, a free phenomenon by the phenomenology of the world:” Revelation of God as auto-revelation does not owe something to the phenomenology of the world but it rejects it because it is strange by its own phenomenology. ” Michel Henry insists on that the true of the world does not offer access at God. The access is given by its auto-revelation in Life, God is life. He disagrees with Heidegger: ” the Heidegger’s thought negates radically the mode of revelation because is made outside of the truth of the world and its killing is not accidental but principally. ” Revelation of God is its auto-revelation.

The principle used by Marion is that of exclusion of reduction. The reduction is made by the personal I, the witness of the phenomenon, respectively of donation. The reduction of the donation at the personal I and at the horizon of possibility make revelation impossible, theophany, and more than that, keep the personal I bound by idolatry. This is the god out aside by the principle of exclusion of reduction at I according to Marion. The sense of reduction has for Marion a negative aspect when the reduction refers at personal I who offers the significance of the donation and the other, positive, when the reduction of the phenomenon refers at the pure phenomenon, without determination by some conditions or limits, or by the horizon of Being. In Being Given Marion proposes another principle of phenomenology: so much reduction, so much donation as the biggest principle of phenomenology. It is talk about a reduction at donation or the pure donation. The proper appearance of the phenomenon must not bear the limits of recipient. The phenomenology must permit revelation without any manipulation from ego. The saturated phenomenon does not need an ideal adequate of intuition, it could not be thought as object how is in Kant’s thinking. Incapacity to produce the object is not caused by a missing of donation but by an excess of intuition. About the saturated phenomenon it is talked better at Dative and not at Nominative. The saturated phenomenon is not more reduced at the personal I who looks at. It does not appear under the condition of possibility but it is an experience of impossibility. To push phenomenology at its limits makes possible a reflection about the possibility of revelation.

#### **4. Jean-Luc Marion: the constriction of metaphysics and a God of excess**

Important in Marion’s thinking is the wish to defeat the metaphysics and to broad the limits of phenomenology at its extremes, a motivation to be criticized for many time. He has written two important books for theology. *Idol and Distance* – 1977 and *God without Being* – 1982 are the best known books those who speak English. Both of them treatise a mystical theology which put aside the conceptual idols. With Marion, the new French phenomenology was associated with the return to theology and his work *God Without Being* was labeled really a theological work. The project of his work was to treat about revelation or to think God absolutely transcendent and liberated by any condition. Marion tries to succeeds this limitation of metaphysical language and to imply the death of God as a help. At the end he promotes an non-metaphysical language for theology, a language that is rather iconic than idolatrous.

This parallel between theology and phenomenology by Marion has been for many times criticized. But many of them seem to be imperfect, think those who know better Marion, Arthur Bradley, and Derek Morrow). His phenomenological and theological work keeps the coherence with the effort to limits the

constriction of metaphysics and to liberate God, the I and the other from these traditional limits (love is the adequate modality for him).

Marion's study on Descartes was a preparation for later to save the name of God by definitions of being and to speak about God in terms of exceeds. Marion thinks that Descartes is radical opposed to theological and philosophical truths from his time and he rejects rather the univocal way to make affirmations about God and creatures. Marion underlines that this univocal language leads at a subordination of divine to human, at a human control to divine which at the end eliminates the divine transcendence. Ontological univocal mode of speaking draws after it the epistemic univocal. For Descartes there is a clear distinction between the divine and human knowledge. Nothing can be said about man in the same way how is said about God. The concept of being as the highest definition for God and at the same time as term which defines both man and God shows the reason for which Marion wants to liberate God from this language of being, why does he reject the univocal between human and divine. Descartes rejects that the act of knowing the world is identical with the act of that of knowing God and the truths of mathematics are divine and equal with God; rejects that God can be measured by our understanding and that God can be reduced at our understanding, that this knowledge is also divine. Descartes insists that the mathematics truths do not offer access at God, as it was believed in his time. He notices better a radical separation between these two worlds, between God and creation. There is only one knowledge, that of incomprehensibility.

According to Marion, metaphysics bears also the character of presence. The ego examines and builds the world and puts on order and a structure over the things as objects. The act of thinking happens exclusively in present. Ego transforms all in objects and they become present to the mind by observation. Even the past by imagination and memory becomes present. The time is thought by the ego in terms of presence. The existence is thought by ego as presence in present. In Descartes thinking there is both, a theological and a metaphysical foundation. Marion underlines the relation between God and man, beginning with Descartes, is understood by modern metaphysics in terms of power and capacity. The term *capacitas* from a partaking in grace makes a move towards domination by the instruments of power. From this motive, the Cartesian ego becomes problematic in three ways: as basis of the whole knowledge and prim principle of metaphysical system, the autonomous substance and with own power, infinite power to manipulate itself, the world and even God. Marion is certain that the ontology by Descartes is based in ego cogito. The epistemology assumes an ontological function. The ego serves as foundation for all beings and for its own being. Descartes elaborates and builds an original metaphysics with an onto-theology of ego. The ego doubts by its own rationality. The ego discovers the divine code and it sees itself with less power.

Marion tries to defeat metaphysics treating about God and speaking about donation, gift. He assumes the definition of metaphysics from Heidegger as onto-theology and interprets the metaphysics as project of foundation. The Highest Being is both God and human. The Highest Being becomes determinate by causality for its need to exist. Problematic it becomes when the human ego becomes the Highest Being that fundamentals the entire reality. The phenomenology by Marion about donation is a trial to escape from limits of metaphysics which tries to base all beings into the Highest Being indifferently whether it is human or divine. Metaphysics is not defeated by ignoring its discourse or simply by opposition. Rather, the defeating of metaphysics means to understand and to take seriously the limits of a particular thinking. It means to find a way to be succeeded. It is not talk about a destruction of metaphysics but about succeeding, as Marion did in his theological and phenomenological word.

The first step made by Marion was to liberate God and the human ego by the limits of metaphysics. Marion suggests that Pascal succeeds metaphysics through a relation between heart and truth. He follows Pascal and according to Marion, the love does not imply an abandon of ration or of thinking. But it refers rather at a different kind of thinking or knowledge. By this is showed that the truth cannot be reduced at metaphysics and that the thinking is possible outside its limits. The ration of the will or of the heart helps to succeeds metaphysics. Pascal rejects this exercise to prove the existence of God and rejects any discourse about God sustained by metaphysics. For him metaphysics is only a synonym of proofs about the existence of God without any sense. Metaphysics, according to Pascal, never could reach the knowledge of God because its method is only intellectual.

The project of Marion in theology and in phenomenology is a trial to recuperate a language for divine but not the univocal one; it is a trial using the concept distance and icon. He proposes rather to assume the Dionysian theology that makes possible an adequate nomination of God. The ideas gained from its study on Descartes will help Marion as indicators to liberate God from thought idolatry and to protect the Name. God cannot be under the conditions of definitions or reflections about Him. The philosophical definitions about God must be replaced with the dialog with God. In the same sense speaks also Ruud Welten: “ If there is any God, He exists not because I feel the obligation to speak about him but because He speaks me. This is the key of Marion’s work. The thought is able to open to God. ” Marion declares himself an sustainer of reveled theology, the only real theology. This kind of theology is not under the constrictions of metaphysics but rather it speaks about experience of this God than about its experience. Even at the beginning of the work, God without Being, Marion focuses that the source and the origin of theology is in God. Theology can speak about God following the axiom that” only God can speak adequately about God ” or when ” the origin of discourse is also its objective. ” As rule, Marion suggests that the theologian who speaks about God does not affirm simply words, to target by words towards God. As is in the theology of Parents, theology must be a kind of prayer. Although the task of theologian is to understand the text and to represent it, that means firstly that the one who must speak must be in communion with the divine in a way that God is the starting point.

Tobias Specker in his analysis on the icon in Marion’s study underlines the importance of invisible in the icon. The invisible becomes visible in icon while it remains invisible. He becomes visible as invisible and by this he indicates the difference between icon and the one represented in icon. In the understanding of the icon and of relation between divine and human or of the revelation of the divine towards human, Marion brings a new concept, distance. This concept defends against the univocal and introduces the irreducible between man and God. The distance it is not only a negative reference but it refers at the relation between God and man, at a paradox of withdraw and of coming. The concept of distance keeps both infinity and incomprehensibility of God succeeding so the ontology and causality. By this concept is resolved the problem of ontological difference proposed by Heidegger and that difference of Derrida. It speaks about a God over being, over the god of absence, about a God that cannot be defined or understood. The distance makes impossible any univocal language because the intimacy with the divine coincides strictly with withdraw. The forgetting of distance which takes place in idolatry leads at its elimination, at idolatry or even at the death of God, proximity with God or even atheism. Although Marion focuses the transcendence and ineffability of God, he speaks for many times about God’s presence or its immanence. The divine nominations have the role to underlie the distance which separates but at the same time unites. They stay in opposition with the silence about God. Any silence in metaphysics and in theology that forgot the names of God offers silent idols. To keep silence it is not

enough to escape from idolatry because the characteristic of the idols is to keep silence. Only the predication which praises God keeps a discourse about God.

Practically, Marion finds the concept of distance in Dionysus's theology. Starting from him, Marion describes the distance as the place where God shares Himself to human, where man receives himself in his hands. Distance cannot be understood, it constitutes the place where man is understood ecstatically in his reference to God. The partaking of creature to Creator does not destroy the distance but the distance provokes the participation. In Descartes' case this distance is marked by analogy between God and human being. The Dionysus's theology with its implications is necessary for Marion just to defend the name of God and to make impossible a localization God's name into a concept or into an object under the human knowledge. By this theology the divine names remain non-nameable. The name withdraws even when it is given. The predication becomes impossible. The third way of eminence it is proved to be necessary to defeat the categorical pretensions and even the apophatic idolatry. The mixture of the two ways, cataphatic and apophatic, meet a failure. The third way, of eminence, does not reestablish the predication but rather insist continuously on the impossibility of definition or of predication about divine by move towards a discourse of praise or of prayer. In *Idol and Distance* Marion offers a consolidation to understand the distance with the aim to defeat idolatry. In this work, Marion speaks about a place where we are kept. Distance offers us proximity. The infinite space offers intimacy. Marion binds distance by partaking at what we cannot be participating. Participation never will jump over distance only to eliminate it, but it traverses as the single field for union. Participation grows only participation at what is not possible to participate and the non-participation grows at what we cannot participate as much as we participate more intimately at participation. But it is never eliminated this participation but all the time is somebody invited at participation continuously. Marion proves that he appropriates himself to eastern thinking of participation and of theosis as a result of participation at God. Marion bind so the revelation of God or the visibility of God by Christ. Christ offers his body as evidence to measure the divine distance. This distance becomes filial as that between Father and the Son and proposed to human. In filiations we experience the distance. The Christ's filiations bears kenosis. The divine grave come over us obliquely in the pure form of Christ.

## 5. God after Metaphysics

The thought about God does not appertain to thinking. The idea of God goes ever the horizon of thinking and it creates abilities of thinking. There are examples in the history of philosophy when the expression *thought about God* is understood often as my thought about God or God is nothing more than object of that Thinking. God as object is the symptomatic of the incapacity of metaphysics to think God as impossibility of thinking. For metaphysics God appears all the time within human mind. To express the experience of God has been proved to be enough complicated. To have an experience of God, He must discovers himself to my own perceptions.

Marion has proved that it is possible to make theology in postmodernism after the critics against to modernism. It is not talked about a replacing of the old metaphysical categories with the new ones or from outside metaphysics. But it were used modalities within the history of philosophy, notions or paradigms lesser used, even forgotten. The reflection about God after metaphysics has led to a personal God than to a concept about God; a God that is reached by relations generated by prosopon and icon; a

God who appears suddenly; a God who is better understood through a language of praise and hymnology and in the music of hymns than through a system of logoi of theology; a God who touches us and scandalously He invites us to touch Him back: a new order of knowledge that separation between Him and The Other disappears in touch. Theology after metaphysics tried to bring God back at the human body and by this it has reactivated the event of resurrection. Its aim was neither to treat about religious phenomenon nor about religion but about God Himself. To understand the reality of revelation of God as God he needed concepts as gift, excess, face, and icon. The true theology had to finish being a modern *theo-logy* and to appear as *theo-logy*. Marion has contributed to a post metaphysical theology, non-correlation and centered on revelation. The postmodern theology by Marion's reflection offered a pre modern insistence on revelation.

Modernity has meant the final figure of metaphysics, as it is developed at Descartes and Nietzsche while post modernity begins when the metaphysical determination is put under questions. The metaphysical nominations imposed to God have reflected only its metaphysical functions and they have hidden the mystery of God. To dismiss metaphysics, Marion had to penetrate the source and the origin, the human ego. The truth and the knowledge have become dependent by the subject who analyzed them with its own method. The human ego became the foundation of knowledge and even of its being. The saturated phenomenon comes and opens the way of a description of possibility for God to appear where ego does not appear as subject but it is moved in Accusative, an ego constituted by The Other. The ego does not more look at but it is looked, it discovers itself in the horizon of God; the ego appears in the horizon of God and not God in the horizon of ego. Marion uses deconstruction and put aside the idolatrous conception about God. It does not work with evidence as happened in metaphysics but he proposes a rethinking of God according to distance from icon. In this way, I am not more the ego transcendental but rather the witness, constituted by what has happened to me. The using of icon by Marion is not accidental: first is its look that who addresses us and not ours toward him. This return is expressed by inverse perspective. The icon projects the horizon outside, in behind and over the looker it exists nothing, no horizon behind the icon can be seen because now the horizon is now in other place, in our side. By inverse perspective, the icon does not pretend to be seen but the icon is that sees us. Strictly speaking, the icon refuses to be object of our observation; it refuses the pretention to be transformed in object for our eyes. It is talked about us who are appearing to the icon and not inverse. The look does not appertain to man who tasks toward visible; such a look appertain to the icon where the invisible becomes visible ... the icon looks at us, it is preoccupied with us. But Marion does not remain here with the explication of relation between icon and viewer. He goes on and so the ego is changed, its quality is changed; it becomes person who presupposes the communion, a stare who can get it in the front of the icon and in the front of the others. So to think, it is remembered that in the patristic is used the term icon as synonym with the person. The term *prosopon* is constituted by the other who looks at it. The community is the mode of existence of person and a person can exist only in community. The person characterizes essentially a being that is opened to the other's view.

The term *prosopon* denotes an I opened to the other's view and even more, constituted by that view. The person is not a donation, a given but a process of creation occasioned by a continual and mutual exposition towards the other. To be person means to be towards a face, to be in the front of the other, to be present in other's view. To be person means to be on the way to the other. That situates my being into an ecstasy, an outgoing from me towards the other.

Manoussakis in the phenomenology of the person is not in opposition toward Marion but he rather completes the phenomenology of the person or the becoming of the ego at the stage of person. For

Manousakis the incarnation of Christ has opened the way of an evaluation of the person and it has led us to see the irreducibility and irreplaceability. The person does not receive the statute as person only from the Other from where it receives the existence and the being. The sense of *prosopon* is the capacity to be in relation. The person as relational structure partakes at the formulation of a phenomenology of God's experience. For Manousakis the human persona appears as field of epiphany and to be in relation is actually a way of phenomenology. He urges that phenomenology of God should begin with the person, from an outgoing from itself.

The god of philosophers seems to be rather an impersonal god in opposition with that one of prayer and of faith who is personal. The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moshe, and David and of Jesus Christ is not the same as that of philosophers. That is because he is not interested in human history or in human nature. He does not inspire, protect, he is not creative, he is not Savior or a presence who can strengthen. We must not consider that the god of philosophers is cold and impersonal but onto-theology fall because it has not been able to explicate the person. Because the modern philosophy does not develop a philosophy of the person, it has put the accent on the ego and in this way it has helped the developing of psychology in all its forms. The behavior of the XX century shows how less humanity can be found in the fields with an accent on the human existence. Feuerbach with the observation that God is according our likeness, the condemnation of the moral God by Nietzsche, the rejecting of God as *causa sui* in the case of Heidegger were less examples for a modern trend toward atheism than a critic against the concepts about God which limited Him according to human measure. Marion under the influence of Balthazar and Levinas, underlies not our experience with God but its experience with us. For Marion, the icon is that that gives the invisible to thinking but not on the base of ego's capacities but in own terms. But to feel this reality it is necessary the prayer and not the simple observation of the icon; the icon does not mediate the presence but exposes the distance which the viewer meets it.

Love has offered the solution for metaphysics to be defeated. It is bound by the Christian God, by the relationship of love among the Trinity persons, by the kenotic sharing of God. Love has received phenomenological connotations and this thing happens in phenomenology with the help of revelation. God is offering itself to be thought without idolatry only starting from itself. He is offering himself to be thought as love and as donation. John D. Caputo observes that God's definition in the New Testament, God is love, is opposed to God's definition only in the terms of onto-theology, of possibility and actuality, of existence and essence. To say that God is love does not mean to impose limits to God, because love is excess and not moderated. The existence of God is given in the experience of love. Love is perfected not among brothers but when it is extended at crazy and impossible. The project of Marion, both phenomenological and theological, shows how theology could have own place in the XX century. He tried in this project to look after God and to answer to questions of postmodernism. Marion tried to show that we can speak about God although many of the Christian symbols are disintegrated, the authority is relative. The simple reaffirmation of assurances was not enough. The project of Marion was a proof that it is possible to answer to provocations of post modernism and that theology can be thought differently. The post modern theology wants to own a language about God so that it can be considered theology. In this case, incarnation occupies a central place because it determines the single language adequate for God and so that if the praise, of hymnology.

The language of God, theology, is better understood as the praise language of God. In the virtue of the incarnated one, the un-circumscribed and the non-representational can be depicted and described in the icon. If the icon was revealed to be the own model expressing the paradigm of the incarnation of the Word, then the hymn could serve as iconic language.

In the theological language of Dionysus and of Augustine it could be observed that hymnology is not a dialog about God but rather a dialog with God. Along of his treatise, Dionysus replaces the verb *to say* with the verb *to praise* keeping the biblical-liturgical line for the nomination of God within hymnology: " I will say your name to my brethren, in the middle of the Church I will praise it. " Hebrews ( 2, 12 ), Psalms ( 21, 24 ). In hymnology, both in Christian and Judaic tradition can be observed that the subject ceases to speak with authority, certainly or with the arrogance of the ego. It is talking here but another voice appear here, a voice which prays, ask for, wishes, promises, hopes and even ask for, for instance, psalm 51. Never the Psalter speaks with the sense of the ego. When he speaks to the other, The Wholly Other, then its voice is under silence. The paradox of the hymn is that it is never mine. The hymn, music and the words are not mine as my discourse. The hymns as well as the icons do not bear the signature. For Manousakis hymnology can offer more than a speculative knowledge as theology does. It is not talk about a language about God but a communion with God. Manousakis suggests that it is rather talk about a phenomenology of hears and of listening. This thing was forgotten by philosophy.

Post modernism clarifies what was known but forgotten. Not the truth of the world offers access at God. The access is offered by its own revelation. To talk about God it is done only beginning from God. The revelation of the Son is auto - revelation of the Father. To know the Son is a condition to know the Father, John ( 8, 19 ). For post modernism the single discourse that contents is the discourse that Christ offers about him. Despite demythologizing, in Christianity is remembered the origin of the truth: " as the world to believe that you have sent me..... as the world to know that you have sent me, and these knew truly that I am from you and they believed that you have sent me, " John ( 17, 21 ) Postmodernism proposes the acceptation of John Baptism's words: " And I saw the Holy Spirit coming down as a dove and it stayed on him .... And I saw and I confessed that this is the Son of God", John ( 1, 32 ). Postmodernism proposes to be accepted the confession of the Father, " And the Father who sent me, This one has confessed about me", John ( 5, 37 ). Postmodernism comes and underlies that to speak about God as donation from a theological point of view means that it is possible to describe a meeting with God understood as one of the grace, impossible to foresee it, to manipulate it. God reveals Himself and is gift. In postmodernism, Christian theology reestablish that relation between God and man is described as gift, it is his own donation which initiates this donation and facilitates it. The initiation and capacity to realize the relation is given by God and the move towards relation is seen to be understood not by justice but by exceeding love. The relation with God takes place in the own offer of God who is never under condition. Theology in postmodernism is not a theology without Church as it was happened in Protestantism in the XIX century. Rather it is a theology of mission, ecclesial one. Theology has the pretention not to be understood only as taking the floor but it is authorized word in a community and in the service of a community. Theology in postmodernism is not a taking the floor and reduced at a philosophical institutionalized work. The interest was that of a kind of life. The need of salvation is the definition of postmodernism.

### **Dostoevsky – for a faith of postmodernism**

Dostoevsky's work wants to be an answer at the crisis and the spiritual structure from its time. Its work does not seem to be a theological system but first of all, the truths of the Gospel are incarnated in people. Dostoyevsky's work seems to be rather a phenomenology of faith, a manifestation of it both in the human

soul and in people's life. It is talk about a faith in Jesus Christ Himself. Dostoyevsky does not treat theological schemas but he raises problems which are met by ordinary man in connection with God and with its own destiny. Dostoyevsky's man is the God's seeker, both Ivan Karamazov and Aliosha, his brother. Dostoyevsky does not leave man in the front of aporia, into an situation without way. He offers an answer by man who lives a life in Christ, by man who wants to touch the impossible. He himself accepts the impossible which succeeds the truth and any logic:" If somebody would prove me that Christ is outside of truth and that the truth excludes Christ, I would rather remain with Christ than with the truth. " The truth which is rejected by Dostoyevsky is the deduced truth, rational, judged by ego and analyzed by it for the quality of true. The story of Dostoyevsky starts from a traditional reality, their exceptionality designates a fantastical reality and this fantastic is the essence of reality. If fantastic is unbelievable for others, for him the fantastic is the essence of reality. The fantastic is reality and reality is fantastic and because it is reality then it is noteworthy. He does not treat about the highest Being who is present in different theologies and reflections. He refers at the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who latter He was revealed to the people in Jesus Christ. He sends man to the icon. In the front of the icon is everything.

The faith exposed by him is ecclesiastical while the critics against this faith come from West: the affirmation about God as affirmation about man was one from the conclusions of intellectual people. The faith in God was not metaphysics but rather pragmatic because the prayer was the best therapy. The people itself manifests the faith by pilgrimages at monasteries, by the receiving of the holly sacraments, by the obeying the word of those with experience in faith, of starets who were receiving a big honor. The culture of people was the Gospel of Christ whose icon was sent generation after generation. " From my folk I received Christ in my heart" means that this Christ was not captive in definitions and talks about him. The folk had kept the divine image of Christ clearly. The image of this Christ was absorbed from the writings of the Fathers. The folk had become the keeper of the true; it was educated in the Church in the front of the icons. The folk gives births to saints and they illuminate the way. This folk were rooted in the Gospel of Christ and in the holy liturgy. Not the atheist intellectuals have inspired the folk but its saints.

Dostoyevsky's anthropology is based on love, Christ and his believer penetrates each other, Christ is discovered in the face of man, in its communion with him. The face of that one who believes could become icon of Christ, a description of the phenomenology of experience of God opposed to its absence. Love and the iconographic argument are themes which are not separated in his reflection about God in Dostoyevsky's opera. Love is bound by prayer, by humility, by confession of the sins: " Lord and Master of my life... " was the prayer best known by folk.

" Civilization without Christ" is definition of secular society given by Dostoyevsky. It is the society where the values are reevaluated, the worse becomes better and better becomes worse or the worse is not more worse. Even separated by God, man still keeps the aim, to become god without God. The dialog between the cardinal and Christ represents the disagree of society to have Christ in centre, the possibility of a life without God only to save as legitimately what is rational. On the cultural field in Dostoyevsky' time was a fight, to keep or to reject the Gospel of Christ. The cultural world was between these two poles. It was talk about the man of Christ and the man as measure of all things, its own law in concurrence with God. He added himself to Gogol against those called God Constructors, against individualism which was opposed to the person. Individualism could not love. This was the reason for which he rejected Europe. The cause of moral pluralism has appeared because the people laft Christ.

The reality of Christ is led by the perfection of the saint from the icon or by the opposite. His reality is a mystical reality. He followed the purification and the liberty; he resurrected the faith in man and in its

notions regarding the inner of man negated by Humanism. The instruments of God's knowledge are the human reason and the power of judgment for Ivan Karamazov. The affirmations about God are empty and without sense. If he wants to understand the reality would be destroyed. But reality is different, not the fantastic one but the one under the conditions of reason, regarding only what the human being could understand. The feeling of God's mystery falls in the front of Ivan's judgment. That one who risks not to pass the exam is Christian God. Ivan accepts a false God, a god by man invented, a human projection, present in affirmations and in reflections. This was the God under discussions, both lover and indifferent regarding His creation. This God is accepted by Ivan, kept in reflections and aporias.

The elder Zosima has a strong spirit of observation. He understands the mode of thinking from Ivan: he accepts voluntarily this false god just to eliminate it. This god was not more believable and the result would have been tragic. "If would have not been faith in God and in eternity, than everything is possible." This tragic consequence regarded the man. Dostoyevsky succeeds Feuerbach and Nietzsche in his reflection about God. The will to power had to appear and to make itself present, the crime was recommended and logical. All is possible if God is not more believable. If the end is touched in faith, then everything is possible. The end in faith had to be offered by this false god. God had to prove Himself able and believable. The blasphemy of Ivan consists just in the acceptance of his God without credibility. Ivan mocks Aliosha, the elder Zosima and the youths from a pub even with this god unable and not understandable, without love for man. Ivan is not only a God's seeker but he is more than that. This was a problem that preoccupied him, he analyzed the possibility of this god and he offers the result. He is convinced by his result, that that god is only an idol and he tries to urge others to pass this God through the court of rational judgment.

From all Dostoyevsky's themes appeared in his work, love, forgiveness, hopes and the prayer appear often as modalities to have access at God. For him the work of holy fathers played a major role in his own life. From Inquisitor's words results that Christ did not love man because he offered him too heavy gifts that man could not support them. Christ has promised to man the spiritual bread but the gift was inadequate for him. The inquisitor shows his superiority over Him as it is thought in secular thinking where it is showed superiority over the Christian values. Nothing is to condemn, there is justification for any behavior and ethics because this invented God is questioned. In modern Christianity the image of Christ and Christ Himself is without any power. The secular world rejects the Christian order and takes the world from God's hand just to correct the Christian order. This is the sin of the secular man: he negated the image of Christ and the truth preached by him. Dostoyevsky offers an answer not by a philosophical system about life, but by a Christian life incarnated in persons. Aliosha Karamazov but first Father Zosima represent the answer at this poem, true icons in literature. If it is possible to speak about a phenomenology of atheism, then it is possible to speak about a phenomenology of faith. It took place a miracle and it is not talk about holy relics of father Zosima. He resurrects in the form of Aliosha who lives a spiritual happiness. The new man of Dostoyevsky is endowed with faith, love, hopes prayer and responsibility for his neighbor. The new man of Dostoyevsky could be light for others, it bears the image of a cherubim, it could transmit the faith to others by its own example, it is the man responsible for everything but also guilty for everything. Faith in God and love for the neighbor are bound each other. The Christian for Dostoyevsky is not the man who looks for God rationally but the man endowed with love.

## Conclusions

There have been theologians that have believed that a modality of Christian life could be found. New possibilities have been discovered for a life of Christian faith in the new changed world. In the second half of the XX century the theological debates were intense. The modern ideals have been changed. The all hopes that the entire humanity will be united in a tolerant and liberal theology have been shattered. The idea that the world will progress toward a better future, succeeding the new boundaries, the idea that society will be happier, all have become implausible.

Postmodernism is not something that should be applauded or criticized. It is only a cultural and social context where man is a part of it and he asks himself whether it is still possible to think theologically or not in this postmodern world. How should be theology in this time when the faith in the big Met narrations had fallen, or what should say the theologians, how do we report to God, Church and faith. In this distance away from God (especially after Auschwitz) the Christians seem to refined the own way even in this estrangement. This weakness gave birth to a wish for salvation. Theology in postmodernism seeks to find a name for God, for transcendent reality of divine. Those who wrote theological, philosophical and anthropological literature in this context of postmodernism have been orientated toward the last sense of life. Their daily question is " how could be our life so that we could make place to an experience of transcendence " ? Postmodernism reevaluate the relation of culture with the Gospel, it brings it back at its roots. Secularization aimed toward God and man. The secular vision about life meant the change of Christianity into an system in concurrence with other systems and the will of man has priority before God's will. Because the dialog with God has not been more practiced, than nor man could not talk more with God, he could not make more theology. If he did it, than he has created its own idol. By secularization man became the equal of God, he is the mature man who does not need God as hypothesis, it meant atheism. From a theological viewpoint, secularization meant a capitulation of theology, of the way to do theology, so to say, the true knowledge of God.

The apparent triumph of secularization had major effects over theology from XX century and that consisted in the absence of God. From theologians who tried to talk about God, to be Christians, have chosen the way of secular theology, a world where God could not make something but only the human beings had a chance to do something. The reality of God appears under the form of death of God understood not as absence of experience of God but as experience of absence of God. The idea of absence of God and the wholly other has encouraged the theologians of the death of God.

It was the task of theologian in the front of idolatrous projects of thought to react against such illness, warning regarding the peril mentioned by Nietzsche. It was affirmed by Merold Westphal that actually Nietzsche, Marx and Feuerbach did a plagiary work, that the mode of critic would have the roots in the biblical religion, that the own motivation is rather the fear against idolatry and that their house is the community of biblical faith. It was not possible to think God as man did it about Him but rather possible how God was thinking about Himself. Postmodernism meant a ceasing of faith in Enlightenment; it meant a rejection and a re-contextualization. It has argued about the human limits of knowledge.

Theology in postmodernism reminds that it has a participative nature, the theological knowledge is perihorethic, it pretends participation and participation offers the chance of knowledge. Jean Francois Lyotard and Richard Rorty have rejected Christianity but the theological one but they affirmed themselves against the god of metaphysics, a god from a human projection. Theology in postmodernism

is possible. Not only that it puts under question the secular thesis but more than that it has demonstrated that it is possible to make theology in postmodernism. The death of God has received in postmodernism a positive meaning. What had to be eliminated from theology has received this label. Under the death of God was hiding only an idol. It was not necessary to create a new theology. Something had been forgotten and wrong interpreted. Not any god could save us but only the lively one. A god reduced only at a proof of existence cannot offer possibility of meeting, to be united with him and finally, to get the salvation.

Postmodernism can be understood as a shock but also as a provocation regarding the nowadays way of thought: the knowledge and the scientific mode of knowledge is not the single way of knowledge. In postmodernism God is not more irrelevant, the life of religious is restored. The experience of impossible reappears under study and it is lived a new way of life. Postmodernism finds in it the resources to avoid the death met in secularism. The return to patristic and its vision is important not only for theology but for the entire economical, social, and political life, for the relations among institution. The passion for God after a secular culture is the characteristics of postmodernism.

Postmodernism reminds that this knowledge of Christianity is neither based on speculations not on observations but on apostolic confessions. Deconstruction is a critic of theism and against any discourse that makes affirmation about God. It is not orientated against God's faith but rather against a language about God. It has wanted all the time to put aside the limits and to follow the impossible, it has manifested as passion for succeeding the possibilities, a passion for impossible. The aporias had to be deconstructed. The truth the Christianity wants to affirm is that the one called Messiah is truly Messiah, Christ the son of God, born before ages, who keeps in himself the eternal life. The historical truth deduced through critical method does not succeed to discover the Truth. It was pleased to have an historical Jesus born in Pilate's time, a reformer of that time. Postmodernism comes with a philosophy of Christianity, a manifestation, an epiphany, appearance of The Revealed. Postmodernism discovers itself as a veritable phenomenology of life. By Marion's project the metaphysics is broken and its concepts are put aside. By this had taken place a correction of what was to be called theology but it has been brought in attention patristic or the mode of patristic thought. Maybe that was forgotten by western theology.

By changes spent in postmodernism theology could defeat the violence and the limits of metaphysics, the secular generally speaking. The death of God meant a theological promise. Phenomenology helps theology to be saved by conceptuality: God is revealed in own terms and liberated by any condition. The new mode of thought avoids the conceptuality. The liturgy governs the meeting between man and God. Postmodernism meant a return at home. That Unzuhaue of theology could not be supported. The necessity of an own house was important. The postmodernism proves that man exists on the earth and in the history not only living, building, thinking but also living, building and praying. But Postmodernism has registered a philosophy of Christianity which does not seek to offer a speculative demonstration of the truth but to put in the light the radical new of kind of the truth which is revealed to people. The moving hypothesis of a humanity which is pleased to live without God in the world has been taken seriously.

