



UNIUNEA EUROPEANĂ



Fondul Social European
POSDRU 2007-2013



Instrumente Structurale
2007-2013



MINISTERUL
EDUCAȚIEI ȘI
CERCETĂRII
ȘTIINȚIFICE

OIPOSDRU



ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ

The links between Thomistic anthropology and the Mircea Eliade`s pragmatic ontology

Coordinator:

Fr. Prof.univ.dr. Wilhelm DANCĂ

**PhD Candidate:
Cristian BĂLĂNEAN**

This paper is supported by the Sectorial Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number SOP HRD/1599/1.5/S/136077.

Bucharest, 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bibliography

Introduction

Chapter I: The background research. Philosophical field of insertion

1.1. The background research

1.2 Research philosophical field of insertion. Main ideas of philosophical anthropology

Chapter II: Setting the Thomistic anthropological vision and Eliade's mythical-religious thinking within the coordinates of contemporary debate on religion and the human being

2.1 Philosophical and theological perspectives on religious pluralism

2.2. The specificity of Christian thinking and anthropology, main sources of Thomistic anthropology

2.3. The contemporary debate on the human being

Chapter III: Setting the Thomistic metaphysics of the anthropological model

3.1. Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysical concepts with anthropological relevance

3.2. The Thomistic anthropological model

Chapter IV: Eliade's pragmatic ontology, another kind of anthropological vision. Interference with the Thomistic anthropology

4.1. The complementarity of mythical thinking

4.2. *Homo religious* and *participatio* - the confluence area between the Thomistic anthropology and the pragmatic ontology

ABSTRACT

The topic of this research is to highlight the connections between the Thomistic anthropology, which has an Aristotelian doctrinal nucleus, and the Mircea Eliade's pragmatic ontology. Obviously, the Romanian thinker didn't get his inspiration directly from the Thomistic philosophy, but it is possible for him to have identified some common ideas in the vision on the human nature, especially concerning the transcendental level of the world.

If for St. Thomas Aquinas, the soul represents a form of the body, an entelechy (force working according to its goals), the prime principle that "it has in itself the principle of movement", created from God, for Eliade the human being, seen as a *homo religiosus*, possesses in its structure a transcendental principle which comes from the superior reality.

It is important to specify that for St. Thomas, man is a substantial unity composed of soul and body, so that it forms a unique principle of action. The Thomistic doctrine about the human compound is the basis of the current Catholic theology, being stated in Article 365 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

From the beginning, it should be pointed out that not only the human status regarding the world we live in is the subject of a conceptual pluralism and of continuous debates of ideas, but the very *metaphysical vision* of the world is at the heart of contemporary philosophical disputes. Especially in the western societies, we are witnessing a real assault having positivist and neopositivist origins, whose escalating almost fades the assertion of other alternative epistemological concepts and paradigms.

The positivism that characterizes natural sciences promotes the *materialistic* view of life: everything that exists in the universe may be assigned to the operational categories of these sciences (substance, energy, force, wave, etc). In this regard, man is nothing but a conglomeration of molecules, an organized material system, whose function is subordinated to the laws of physics and chemistry. The psyche is nothing else but an exclusive product of neural activity, which functions strictly on bio-chemical bases having a deterministic content. In essence, man is a simple *epiphenomenon* within the cosmic world, subjected to the blind and implacable destiny of mechanical movements of the matter.

The positivism that characterizes natural sciences promotes the *materialistic* view of life: everything that exists in the universe may be assigned to the operational categories of these sciences (substance, energy, force, wave, etc). In this regard, man is nothing but a conglomeration of molecules, an organized material system, whose function is subordinated to the laws of physics and chemistry. The psyche is nothing else but an exclusive product of neural activity, which functions strictly on bio-chemical bases having a deterministic content. In essence, man is a simple *epiphenomenon* within the cosmic world, subjected to the blind and implacable destiny of mechanical movements of the matter.

Before the offensive of the monist trends, the reaffirmation of Aristotelian thinking can contribute to the rehabilitation of epistemological status of *metaphysics* and to that of theological reflection. This is all the more since, most often, addressing the subject of human nature is done through a unilateral and exclusive perspective without knowing the real value of competing paradigms.

Understanding the Aristotelian-Thomistic anthropological model requires an incursion into the world of the metaphysical concepts through which the philosophers tried to describe the ultimate resorts of existence, beyond which any other form of conceptualization is not possible. Aristotle, especially in his work *Metaphysics*, wanted to detect the *first principles* which are at the basis of reality, of which the meditative subject itself: *the man* is a part of. Within this rational process of apprehension and conceptual re-building of the world, The Stagirite sought to achieve the highest levels of abstraction, but also a higher degree of completeness, thus his philosophical system takes into account not only the nature of physical reality , extra-mental, but very intimate structures of human thought themselves, that is *the thinking of thought*. Thus, Aristotle put under philosophical investigation in the context of cultural and scientific accumulation of his times, even the human nature, whose approach in terms of knowledge doesn't let itself done, without going through several levels contained by the system of Aristotelian thought, especially metaphysics and logic.

For St. Thomas Aquinas, the soul is a *form* of the body, an *entelechy* (force working according to goals), the prime principle that "it has in itself the principle of movement". It is important to note that for St. Thomas, man represents a *substantial unity* made of soul and body, so that they form a single principle of action. Since the soul is the substantial form of the body, it forms a unique principle of action. As the soul represents the substantial *form* of the body, it is

entirely in the whole body and in all its parts, but it is not with all his faculties in the parts of the body, taken individually. In another context, for Thomas the soul acts as the inner principle of the being, organizes its entire ensemble of physico-chemical, biological, vegetative, sensitive and intellectual activities, being together-the metaphysical principle, after joining the matter, leading to the formation of man's personal essence.

In essence, Thomism meant a change in the optical point of view on the classical relation between matter and form, causing the prevalence and redefinition of the relation between *being (ente)* and the essence (*essentia*). Starting from this irreducible premise, God is thought to be the being that does not belong to any gender, being the SUPREME BEING itself, from which all other things derive from, and which "invests" with being all that exists. Therefore, in the Thomistic conception, even if the soul has its own act of being, he needs the body for its own activities and, for this reason, it involves the body in its beingness.

Keywords: being, matter, form, act, potency, human compound, homo religiosus, myth, sacred, participation.