

# Scientific Imaginary vs. Orthodox Theology: Convergence, Coexistence, or Counterpoint?

By Antonis Smyrnaio\*

## Introduction

Understanding history is a highly sensitive human activity, and –in any case– always potential and approximate. Since no time machine can take us back to the past, which is essentially unvisitable, we must at least be aware that we are necessarily moving in probability terms, as well as that our path threads through plausible *rationalizations*, which often is just another way of naming simplifications. But they are all processing persuasion and aiming at it, always seeking to gain the trust of the readers<sup>1</sup>.

One of the ways of understanding history –superficially, at least– is periodization: the construction of axes that intersect the historical diachrony. We could identify three fundamental ruptures in this diachrony. The first one was the so-called Neolithic or Agricultural Revolution, which occurred around 10,000-12,000 BC: from being hunters and food-gatherers, people were transformed to farmers, now brought together in settlements and cities, creating civilizations. The second one was the Incarnation of God the Word during the Roman era with its variations to this day, and, finally, the third was the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century. If the Incarnation –not only according the Orthodox Christian concept–, had brought about a huge disruption in time and the way of life of the world community, many centuries

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1. Ant. L. Smyrnaio, *Ίστοροῦμεν δι' ἐμπιστοσύνης: Ἡ ἐμπιστοσύνη ὡς ἱστοριογραφικὴ μεταβλητὴ*, Harmos Publications, Athens 2023.

later, the Scientific Revolution has again decisively dilated not only the time and the way but also the global space. Consequently, this latest rupture must be seen as of capital and volcanic importance – it has irreversibly transformed world history. Moreover, it is precisely this Revolution, more than any other, which in the last three centuries has fought the divine Incarnation in various and drastic ways, a fact that obliges us to thoroughly investigating its hegemony in the world.

Let us point out, though, from the start, that the Scientific Revolution did not simply establish or promote *science*, i.e. a version of understanding the world among others, albeit more utilitarian, productive and effective; it also intensified and dizzied the *scientific imaginary*. By this term we refer to a grid of homogenized meanings that have slowly acquired a global, institutionalized status, aiming at the much sought-after perfection of an always defective man through the exclusive use of scientific tools. For three centuries now, this grid has literally and metaphorically invaded and colonized not only the consciousness of the people but also their subconscious, having demonstrated an enormous, unknown, and hitherto undiagnosed dynamic – absorbing, passionate, and idolizing. It prevents, without exception, any other idea, project or interpretation that is not immersed and subjected to its vortex. In fact, it translates *science* into *scientific imaginary* and *scientific imaginary* into *science* with seductive ease, blurring the boundaries between them, an energy that has now acquired hegemonic power and status.

But how has this profound colonization been made possible? There is not enough space here to analyze in depth its fascinating genealogy, its Aristotelian and Thomistic roots; we will come closer to the present day, by simply observing that during the last two centuries we have been systematically indoctrinated through mass education, from schools and universities, the press, politicians, our family and all those that are important to us, to accept and serve, probably without much thought or reservation, this *scientific imaginary*, thinking that we are simply serving *science*. On the top of this, this colonization prevents people from reaping the scientific *shell* as a mere tool of use, without further ethical, anthropological and cosmological consequences, and rejecting its *core*, i.e. the scientific imaginary, which claims the world and man with profound aspirations of *theurgy*.

We are therefore being driven towards this strange psychological syndrome, within which genius, creativity and hard work, primary concepts and fundamental activities following the puritanical and capitalist tradition of the last centuries, are co-existing, as it is well known; at the same time, in forward and excellent synergy with narcissism, vanity, avarice and, above all, the relentless paranoia of *thirsting for power*.

### Convergence and Companionship

Let us now turn our attention to the main concern of this presentation. As far as the atheists or religiously indifferent people are concerned, the relation between scientific imaginary and Orthodox theology or religion in general, in its various forms and types, is usually negative. The reason is that –for them– the scientific, rational spirit is totally alien to religious “superstition”; it reproduces, often without reservations, the old precepts of the Enlightenment. Still, as Orthodox or religious people in general, we believe that this relationship has followed at least two narratives to date: the narrative of *convergence* and that of *companionship*.

In the first case, there is usually a resort to an anachronistic “archaeology”, recalling concepts of science, such as those of the Greek antiquity, but also those of Basil the Great, Sophia Sirach or the Book of Exodus, to justify all the achievements of modern technocracy as a direct “blessing and gift of God”, an expression frequently heard in the contemporary theological and ecclesiastical discourse. Of course, it would have been extremely difficult, if not foolish, for us to regard as divine gifts nuclear, biological and “smart” weapons, dizzying cars, trains and planes, as well as the gigantic technology of absolute and thorough surveillance of everything, although all scientific discoveries are subject to the same methodological rules. However, it is usually implied that these “archaeologies” are a therapeutic or phantasmagorical toolbox, the transparency of which is not even allowed to be questioned, since everything has to claim and conquer a future, which it is presented as indisputable.

However, we usually overlook the fact that concepts in general are not supra-empirical, undifferentiated entities, which are always and everywhere applicable. On the contrary, they are imbued with a profound historicity; thus, they are subject to various commitments, which alter their unambiguous or original expression and should never be taken “at face value”<sup>2</sup>. Otherwise, by exhibiting incomprehensible sloppiness and impulsiveness, we are bridging incompatible and only nominally compatible phenomena, insofar as these old concepts are totally inconsistent with the modern and post-modern perception and application of science. Thus, there seems to be no plausible connection between the pre-modern science of herbs, vials and four humors of the body, or the bows, spears and battering rams, with the scientific imaginary that is being systematically practiced in the hidden and open laboratories, with the excessive funding, ruthless rivalries, powerful and multiply protected network of scientific, political and economic interdependencies, global propaganda around it, and, especially, coercive idolization, which have been cultivated during Modern and Post-modern times. The science of interpersonal and spiritual psychosomatic relevance differs from the science of indicators and tools with which science today claims to “see”, from afar, the world<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, modern science and the technology deriving from it, is not an unhistorical, metaphysical concept, born suddenly in Europe through a series of successful observations and experiments, under the auspices of the unquenchable curiosity of gifted men. It is –to be more precise, it has become– a worldly-global superpower, a homogenizing force, born in specific ideological, religious, political, economic and social conditions, for specific reasons and, above all, with specific visions of absolute domination. It is by no means a choice among many others; it has established itself everywhere as a reality and an inexorable “normality”. As Norbert Wiener,

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2. The notion of «ἐπιστήμη» in the Old Testament seems to be related with the knowledge of God’s will – e.g., as it is reflected in the *Deuteronomy*: «Ὅτι ἔθνος ἀπολωλεκὸς βουλήν ἔστιν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐπιστήμη, οὐκ ἐφρόνησαν συνιέναι ταῦτα» (*Deut.* 32, 1, 28-29).

3. “In the context of contemporary science, seeing means, almost exclusively, interpreting evidence that has been produced by instruments”. P. Rossi, *Ἡ γένεση τῆς σύγχρονης ἐπιστήμης στὴν Εὐρώπη*, transl. Pan. Tsiamouras, Hellinika Grammata Publications Athens 2004, p. 53.

the Father of Cybernetics, has noted: “There is no Maginot Line in the mind of man ... there is no end to this vast Apocalyptic spiral ... every frightening discovery simply increases our submission to the necessity of creating a new scientific discovery...”. He therefore warned scientists, “those wise men, who have sanctified in a demonic way their personal pursuits, that in the normal course of events, a consciousness that has been bought once, will be bought again...”<sup>4</sup>.

It actually succeeded in realizing these visions during the last three centuries, overwhelming not only the society, politics, economy, culture and geography on a global scale, but mainly its symbolic and imaginary universe, invading even the very unconscious of the people. It has now acquired an enormous idolatrous dynamism; its power, precisely because of its magnificent phantasmagoria, but also because of its various comforting and impressive achievements, is astonishingly catalytic<sup>5</sup>.

Due to the Scientific Revolution’s relentless dynamics, a completely new world has emerged, which, in many ways, has proved to be radically and tragically hostile to the divine Providence. We will note here only three reasons that explain why this has occurred: Firstly, because this world, instead of having entrusted the past and the future of nature and humanity to God, it chose the providence of the wise, scientific man, the all too glorified expert, who of course happens to be very often a sorcerer’s apprentice, serving in fact a compact, amazingly mutually supporting network of sorcerer’s apprentices<sup>6</sup>. Secondly, because the hecatombs of

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4. N. Wiener, *Κυβερνητική και κοινωνία*, transl. Io. Ioannidis, Papazisis Publications, Athens 1970, pp. 89, 95.

5. It is typical of the criminal naivety, as well as of the catalytic catechetical function that it usually takes place, that some of the science fiction infiltrators at the New York World’ Fair (1939-1940) hung a sign on the archway of the front gate that read with disarming honesty: “Science explores, technology executes, man complies!”, J. Rifkin, *Τὸ τέλος τῆς ἐργασίας καὶ τὸ μέλλον τῆς. Ἡ δύση τοῦ παγκόσμιου ἐργατικοῦ δυναμικοῦ καὶ τὸ χάραμα τῆς μετά-τὴν-ἀγορὰ ἐποχῆς*, transl. G. Kovalenko, Livani Publishing Organization, Athens 1996, p. 129. Let us also recall Gustav Flaubert, who, having visited the first World Fair that had been organized in Paris, wrote in a melancholic mood: “It’s impressive. There are beautiful and extraordinary things. But man was not made to swallow infinity!”. Al. Finkelkraut, *Ἡ ἀχαριστία. Συζήτηση γιὰ τὴν ἐποχὴ μας μὲ τὸν Ἄντουαν Ρομπιτάιγ*, transl. Viky Iakovou, Scripta Publications, Athens 2005, p. 158.

6. The English historian and philosopher R. Collingwood, reflecting on the terrible

the two World Wars<sup>7</sup> and the now imminent threat of a Third one, as well as the modern, irreversible –as they claim– destruction of the environment that has taken place in the Anthropocene era in which we live, would –and could not– have taken place, if the Scientific Revolution had either not started or had followed different, milder paths in the world; if its goal had not been the clearing, and ruthless exploitation and plundering of nature, but reconciliation with it. Thirdly, because the modern storm of atheism has found in the Scientific Revolution its fundamental benefactor, its basic motive, in short, its father – even its foster-father.

It is interesting to note at this point that the main argument of those who invoke the *convergence* of science and Orthodox theology is related to the syndrome of the use of the knife: *with the knife you can cut bread and with the knife you can kill your fellow man*. We consider this to be the most naive and seductive ideology, which, unfortunately, still seems to persist among religious and non-religious people alike.

But why is it naive? Firstly, because the enormous facts of the application of scientific imaginary in every aspect of our lives are not played out at the minimal level of the knife, but at the monstrous level of every kind of, for example, weapon, which secretly and without warning from the other side of the earth can take, massively and brutally, millions of lives. This truly staggering transfer renders the use of this ideal for the current state of affairs either hypocritical or completely naive.

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consequences of the First World War on the eve of the Second World War will note in his autobiography: “...the harmful consequences of any failure on our part to control the human condition were then more serious than ever before, directly proportionate to the importance of the new powers which, in divine indifference, were placed by natural science in the hands of the evil and the good, the mad and the wise man. Not only will every failure to control human affairs result more and more in widespread destruction, since natural sciences will pass from triumph to triumph, but the consequences will tend more and more towards the destruction of all that is good and sane in the civilized world; for the evil man will always begin to use the machinery of destruction before the good, and the madman always before the wise...”, see R. G. Collinwood, *An Autobiography*, Oxford University Press, London 1939, pp. 91-92.

7. These hecatombs were “the offsprings of this overflowing power of man...”. Hans Jonas, *Η αρχή της εϋθύνης. Αναζητώντας μιὰ ἠθικὴ γιὰ τὸν τεχνολογικὸ πολιτισμὸ*, transl. Ntina Samothraki, Theod. Stoufis, Harmos Publications, Athens 2018, p. 23.

Secondly, this ideology is (supposedly) based on the personal responsibility of each scientist to use his or her discoveries positively or negatively. But the contemporary harsh, inexorable reality is that all scientists, even the most honest or suspicious ones, are extremely committed, totally trapped, narcissistically and livelihood-wise, to their sponsors –a laboratory, a company, an institution, or the political-economic elite–, and obey only to their orders. What responsibility does they bear, when even the slightest reservation or differentiation against their always hegemonic expectation is capable of throwing them out of any scientific process? Moreover, it is well known that in too many cases each researcher knows only a small part of the overall project and (often wishes and/or is obliged to) ignore the objective, the whole process and the short-term and, above all, the long-term consequences of the scientific project in question. Where, then, is responsibility to be placed, especially when the narcissistic subsistence –or the subsistent narcissism– prevent the scientists from any deeper examination? Already by joining the various projects, which are lavishly funded –and this is the crucial point!– they declare their total submission, not only to the relevant technical specifications; otherwise, the punishment they are going to suffer would be unbearable for them.

Let us now turn our attention to the second case: the scientific imaginary's *companionship* with Orthodox theology. In this case, the separation of the fields of engagement and devotion is prominent; we can observe the distinguishment between the believer who devotes himself to God, and the scientist who investigates nature. This distinction indicates the existence of two parallel, scientifically and theologically “legitimized” paths towards natural and spiritual knowledge, which are expected and planned to meet in the course of time, in harmonious coexistence – if they have not already coalesced...

This companionship seems to be served primarily by a hybrid figure of the modern world, the “Christian scientist”. He / she often claims that his wish is to discover “the mysteries of God” – by using with the microscope or the telescope, by thoroughly experimenting in the laboratories, by constantly interrogating the material elements; he/she combines religious and scientific faith in a comforting and uncomfortable way. But are the

astral worlds or the DNA really decoding the “mysteries of God”? Is it a spiritual imperative that truly leads us to such an exhaustive and inquisitorial investigation? Is “*in the image*” dependent on the clearing of the universe and the demystification of the world?

We believe that such a manual, mechanistic and pantheistic approach to nature is not compatible with the spiritual view, which announces that “*the coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed*”<sup>8</sup>, since the real mystery of God “*does not bear investigation*”<sup>9</sup>. It seems to be forgotten that the completely secular approach to nature, to which modern science urges us, aims at a purely imperialist and colonialist conception, i.e. the absolute domination, the exhaustive exploitation of resources, the arms race, the complete –and even genetic– control of everything, and the absolute commitment of the trajectories and findings of all scientific knowledge to a hermetic, totalizing jurisdiction that is only and always handled by the powerful of this world together with their companions-subjects. On the contrary, the ecclesiastical literature calls “*mysteries of God*” the treasures of a purely spiritual universe, to which man is called to be initiated, without any worldly aid except his body and soul, not wishing to assert or enjoy his power by exploring the eschaton, the supreme and the most profound, but with the purpose of being transformed by entering the Kingdom of Heaven.

Indeed, it is nowadays extremely rare for the theological discourse not to be conditioned and adopt this extremely dangerous, anti-ecological and anti-Christian idea. For with this dichotomy it leaves the jurisdiction of nature to the scientists as a purely technical, mechanistic issue that satisfies his curiosity and utilitarian pursuit; at the same time, they completely disregard the global political and economic exploitation and abandon the jurisdiction of God over his believers as a mere moral-religious issue or duty, which survives in the space of individual (or, perhaps, ecclesiastical) religiosity, thus succumbing to key Protestant and Enlightenment connotations. It is precisely this perception that frees scientists from any perspective of moral responsibility; also, it

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8. *Luke 17, 20.*

9. Στιχηρὸν Ἰδιόμελον τῶν Αἰῶνων τῶν Χριστουγέννων (= Sticheron idiomelon from the Christmas lauds).

often suspends “Christian scientists” from exploring more deeply the convergence of these two parallel paths.

### The Counterpoints

To our view, the two narratives of *convergence* and *companionship* are –at the very least– unprofitable but also puzzling in the full unfolding of their premises and consequences. But if the convergence and coexistence of the scientific imaginary and Orthodox theology do not ensure some kind of balance between them, since the first quantity has already succeeded in dominating in all fields over the second, then might it be possible to follow some other alternative path? Might it be possible to detect some counterpoint between them?

Let us assume that this is possible, and articulate at least twelve differentiations, some more and some less crucial, that we consider to operate at an elementary primitive level. The articulation of these contrasts, though, will be accomplished by pointing out that they exist and operate not at the level of the everyday life of Christians, who, often suffering from a lack of spiritual criteria, and experiencing the catalytic indoctrination in relation to the scientism’s omnipotence, they conform with extraordinary ease to the spirit and the demands of our century, but we dare to claim that they function substantially in the realm of *holiness*, as far as it is possible to know that through the written evidence<sup>10</sup>.

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10. We should point out here a unique case of a modern saint; unlike others, it seems to have embraced science and technology to such an extent, that he is sometimes called the “saint of technology”. This is St. Porphyrios of Kafsokalyvia. According to our view, his study and involvement with scientific and technological issues, more extensive than the one of the other saints, does not suffice to justify the spirit of scientism, the scientific imaginary that prevails today. It was the product of his pastoral care, as he demonstrated many times, in the context of which even normal, human curiosity was subjected to a holy-spiritual alteration, unknown in all its dimensions, conditions and consequences to most people, who even interpret the meaning of the words “at face value” and undifferentiated: «Ὁ δὲ πνευματικὸς ἀνακρίνει μὲν πάντα, αὐτὸς δὲ ὑπ’ οὐδενὸς ἀνακρίνεται» (= “The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human”), *1 Cor.* 2, 15.

Orthodox theology is not the intellectual enquiry into spiritual matters; it is above all the theology of holiness.

a) The first and fundamental counterpoint has to do with the different perception of the concepts of *knowledge* and *wisdom*. The scientific imaginary invests heavily in knowledge; it is its privileged field, and indeed has been expanding this knowledge for three centuries at an exponential rate and continues unabated to act likewise. It's the weapon against those who question it or are wary of his hegemony. In fact, with extraordinary fluency, it translates this dizzying knowledge into wisdom, attempting precisely –as we have said– to colonize every anthropological and cosmological dimension. The multiplication of knowledge, the validated and monetized manifold expertise, leads to wisdom. This is its main goal: to make and impose *knowledge* as *wisdom*.

On the contrary, in Orthodox theology, *knowledge* and *wisdom* are bound exclusively by the mercy of God; God gives them to man; they come down to us as a request from heaven, they do not ascend as a demand on him. In the classic exposition of this spirit, in the apostle Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, we may read the following in the context of a disarming analysis:

γέγραπται γάρ· ἀπολώ τὴν σοφίαν τῶν σοφῶν, καὶ τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν ἀθετήσω. ποῦ σοφός; ποῦ γραμματεὺς; ποῦ συζητητῆς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου; οὐχὶ ἐμώρανεν ὁ Θεὸς τὴν σοφίαν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου; ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἔγνω ὁ κόσμος διὰ τῆς σοφίας τὸν Θεόν, εὐδόκησεν ὁ Θεὸς διὰ τῆς μωρίας τοῦ κηρύγματος σώσαι τοὺς πιστεύοντας... ὅτι τὸ μωρὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ σοφώτερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐστὶ, καὶ τὸ ἀσθενὲς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἰσχυρότερον τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐστὶ. Βλέπετε γὰρ τὴν κλήσιν ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα, οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί, οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς, ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ Θεὸς ἵνα τοὺς σοφοὺς καταισχύνῃ, καὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ Θεὸς ἵνα καταισχύνῃ τὰ ἰσχυρά, καὶ τὰ ἀγενῆ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὰ ἐξουθενημένα ἐξελέξατο ὁ Θεός, καὶ τὰ μὴ ὄντα, ἵνα τὰ ὄντα καταργήσῃ, ὅπως μὴ καυχῆσθαι πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ [...]. Μηδεὶς ἑαυτὸν ἐξαπατάτω εἴ τις δοκεῖ σοφὸς εἶναι ἐν ὑμῖν ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, μωρὸς γενέσθω, ἵνα γένηται σοφός. ἡ γὰρ σοφία τοῦ κόσμου τούτου μωρία παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ ἐστὶ. γέγραπται γάρ· ὁ δρασσόμενος τοὺς σοφοὺς ἐν τῇ πανουργίᾳ αὐτῶν. καὶ πάλιν· Κύριος γινώσκει τοὺς διαλογισμοὺς τῶν σοφῶν, ὅτι εἰσὶ μάταιοι.

*For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. [...] Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. [...] Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain<sup>11</sup>.*

There is consequently a complete separation between the wisdom of men and the wisdom offered by God. If the apostle Paul was then referring to the wisdom of the Ancient Greeks, who had precisely produced the “*wisdom of this world*”, it is obvious how much more the modern, dizzying and all-powerful scientific wisdom, variously bound, departs from these specific spiritual standards.

b) The second counterpoint refers to the hegemonic spirit of the hunting for the new, this mania for whatever is “new”, but also of the lust for the new (since every ceaseless quest for the new has necessarily a deep libidinal background), the “*hysteria of the new*”<sup>12</sup>. It is the relentless, dizzying and unrelenting pursuit of the new, the novel, the *novum*, which, as Rossi would argue, had been “almost obsessively” overwhelming scientific discourse since the 17th century<sup>13</sup>. Scientific imaginary is deeply imbued with this spirit; it is its *raison d'être* in our world. It has even clung to it in an almost mystical way, so that the old scientific abomination of superstition seems to be just an unprocessed

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11. 1 Cor. 1, 19-21, 25-29; 3, 18-20.

12. P. Bruckner, *Ἡ μιζέρια τοῦ πλούτου: ἡ θρησκεία τῆς ἀγορᾶς καὶ οἱ ἐχθροὶ τῆς*, transl. Loiska Avagianou, Astarti Publications, Athens 2002, p. 270.

13. P. Rossi, *op.cit.*, pp. 113-114.

fantasy, since the very fathers of the Scientific Revolution tasted the flavor of a hermetic, magical knowledge of the past<sup>14</sup>. Techno-sciences are obeying to a paradoxical, mystical self-promotion; as J. Ellul observes, “technology never progresses towards anything, because it is pushed forth in ignorance”<sup>15</sup>.

Moreover, a characteristic version of this lust for the new is most evident in the postmodern cult of alternativity, i.e. the constant, insatiable development of materials, ideas and species, experiences and emotions. An encomium of excess and gigantism is thus constituted, a perpetual construction of elaborate enclaves of the real, an exhaustive carving, where the neurotic, restless self –both modern and postmodern–, longs to dwell alternately. Absolutely related to this new-fangled spirit of alternativity is the “construction” –particularly in the Western societies– of a permanent feeling of boredom, which they even brag that it can be overcome with even more hunting for newness. As Pascal Bruckner has observed, “the West, haunted by the idea of originality, cultivates an excessively negative image of repetitiveness...”; thus, it “invents banality”, with the result that we all “are greatly wounded by monotony”<sup>16</sup>. Of course, it is typical that the boredom thus “constructed” is “not connected to real needs but to desire. And this desire is a desire for sensory stimuli. Stimuli are the only interesting thing...”<sup>17</sup>.

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14. Nietzsche has written in the *Gay Science*: “Do you really think that science would have ever been born, do you think it would have ever developed, if it hadn’t been for all those magicians, all those alchemists, astrologers and miracle workers, who were able to create the hunger, the thirst, the appetite for the occult and for the forbidden powers, initially using the deceitfulness of illusion and promises?”. P. Thuillier, *Ἡ ἐκδίχηση τῶν μαγισσῶν. Ὁ ἀνορθολογισμὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιστημονικὴ σκέψη*, transl. Laokratia Lakka and Antigoni Chatziioannou, Leader Books Publications, Athens 2005, p. 12. P. Rossi has also noted that “On the threshold of modernity, magic and science compose an indissoluble mesh”, P. Rossi, *op.cit.*, p. 72. See also another recent study: Jimeya Canales, *Bedeviled: A Shadow History of Demons in Science*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey 2020.

15. A. Giddens, *Οἱ συνέπειες τῆς Νεωτερικότητας*, transl. G. Mertikas, Kritiki Publications, Athens 2001, p. 203.

16. P. Bruckner, *Ἡ ἀέναη εὐφορία: δοκίμιο γιὰ τὸ καθήκον τῆς εὐτυχίας*, transl. Loiska Avagianou, Astarti Publications, Athens 2001, pp. 105, 97, 113.

17. L. Svendsen, *Ἡ φιλοσοφία τῆς βαρεμάρας*, transl. Pan. Kalamaras, Savalas Publishers, Athens 2006, pp. 37-38.

On the other hand, Orthodox theology is not affected by any unquenchable quest for novelties, nor does it invest in this neurotic sense of boredom; it insists on the traditional, peaceful approach to the world and people, without discarding pain or toil, as it has received them from the Gospel and the teachings of the Fathers of the Church. No saint, even if he had once been an “innovator” regarding the doctrine or in ecclesiastical rituals, for reasons of further delving into them, or because of pastoral economy, never exhibits “lust for novelty”, by radically differentiating himself from his tradition, considering that he is inspired by God’s spirit only when he too is «ἐπόμενος ... τοῖς ἁγίοις πατράσιν»<sup>18</sup>.

c) The third counterpoint is constituted by the source of this hegemonic spirit of novelty, which is the scientists’ narcissistic self-promotion and hetero-promotion. It is not simply a question of the need, the sanctified and mysterious curiosity, or the scientific altruism –so much idealized nowadays– that guides them, without excluding of course that there are also seeds of this modern “innocence” in them. The reason is that, in an age when the techno-sciences are incessantly praised and lavishly funded, while the humanities, now considered “baroque references»<sup>19</sup> are constantly being degraded, it is to be expected that there is not enough space or even awareness of such “innocence”, which are likely to be used merely as a pretext.

On the contrary, in Orthodox theology it is known that the narcissistic syndrome is fought drastically and incessantly through the very ascetic *pedagogy of the will* – and this does not (should not) happen only in the monastic circles.

d) The fourth counterpoint is expressed by the unprecedented *Will to Power* –of Nietzschean origin–, the deep desire for hegemony over nature and men, which has even been hypocritically disguised as the *Will to Truth*. Hans Jonas observed: “Never had the present such a great

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18. Ὁρος Πίστewος τῆς Δ΄ Οἰκουμενικῆς Συνόδου (= Term of the Faith of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod).

19. Jean-Jacques Salomon, *Ἐπιβιώνοντας τῆς ἐπιστήμης*, transl. Athanasia Triantafyllou, Boukoumanis Publications, Athens 2003, p. 310.

power, which moreover is exercised continuously and necessarily – never has it brought such a responsibility, to which one can knowingly respond”<sup>20</sup>. This is illustrated by the fact that the cutting edge of scientific research is not medical or some other light or phantasmagorical science, but exclusively military technology. Everything revolves around it and everything can be of use to it, even if it originates from other fields.

The result of this *Will to Power* is none other than the homogenization of the world, or its plural “*homo-hegemonizations*”, as J. Derrida has aptly formulated them<sup>21</sup> – a concept that ingeniously merges power with the assimilation of all within it. Humans must function as “one man”, ruthlessly supervised, suffocatingly manipulated. For it is only by these “homo-homogenizations” that the plan of God’s saving freedom is expected to be undermined. As soon as the humans’ galloping centrifugal tendencies from those things that for centuries have been holding them together are achieved, and when the peculiar multiplicity of selves is established and man becomes a rootless being, then, amidst this terrible confusion and in order for the latter to be cured, the inevitable necessity of new soothing centripetal tendencies will appear. In it, all personal responsibility and action will be rejected and even eliminated as dangerous, granting all freedom to those who know and decide exclusively before everyone else for them all..

Through this *Will to Power*, the scientific imaginary feels that it is the owner of nature and its inhabitants. It exercises an imperialist and colonialist omnipotence<sup>22</sup>, real and symbolic, over everything, i.e. over what it sets before it as a vulnerable object of conquest and exploitation. It also seeks to correct God’s plan –correction of the body, soul, age, environment, universe–, a correction that has already arrogantly crossed for decades the threshold of transhumanism with biotechnology. It is a

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20. Hans Jonas, *Φιλοσοφικές έρευνες και μεταφυσικές εικασίες*, transl. L. Anagnostou, Indiktos Publications, Athens 2001, p. 148.

21. J. Derrida, *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001*, ed. and transl. Elizabeth Rottenberg, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2002, p. 373.

22. “Science is discovering something important, and technology will soon colonize the field that has been revealed...”: Paul Virilio, *Τò Πανεπιστήμιο τής Καταστροφής*, transl. Vas. Tomanas, Nisides Publications, Thessaloniki 2008, p. 137.

vertiginous and deeply individualistic desire, despite the universal plot that supports it; it is a desire that claims to be altruistic and humanistic, surpassing the simple treatment of dysfunctions and invading the realm of the compulsive prolongation of pleasure. The main issue is not simply to repair and prolong a healthy and vigorous life, but to actually multiply its pleasantries. The consequence of this hegemonic passion that characterizes the scientific imaginary is the fierce competition between scientists and the groups or states that support them, the race for all kinds of armaments, warlike or not. In conclusion, the deeper, messianic and theurgic objective is, through the constant ruptures, for the acceleration of the future to be achieved: “‘To leave your stump’ does not mean to passively intervene in chronology; it means to accelerate the moment!”<sup>23</sup>.

In contrast, Orthodox theology neither recognizes nor grants property rights to any living being. All things are subject to the principle of temporal vanity: “*Today it is mine, tomorrow it will belong to another, but never to the same person*”! Both rulers and those who are ruled are, like David, “*foreigners and exiles*”<sup>24</sup>, surviving solely “*by God’s grace*”, i.e. by toleration, because of God’s mercy. The different universes are the products and exclusive property of God the Creator; furthermore, no hegemony is (or should be) sought, not even that of the current ecclesiastical officials, since the basic premise of the Gospel is precisely that: “*Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all*”<sup>25</sup>. Also, in this space no competition can be entered, not even competition with the secular, disguised as altruism, sense of the word. Here one competes only with one’s old self and the devil – and with no one else.

e) A fifth counterpoint exists in relation to *the fear of death*: The scientific imaginary fears death, because it is panicked by the afterlife; the afterlife disorganizes it. On the contrary, it organizes its action exclusively within the mundane, earthly or universal space - it is holed up in it.

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23. M. Löwy, *Λύτρωση και Ούτοπία*, transl. Th. Papadopoulos, Psychogios Publications, Athens 2002, p. 308.

24. *Psalm* 38, 13.

25. *Mark* 9, 35.

It therefore defends itself against death, by repelling it. This feeling has been described by the American sociologist Geoffrey Gorer as the “pornography of death”<sup>26</sup>, i.e. death as the fundamental taboo of modern –and now also of postmodern– culture, which, if it cannot be defeated, it must be repelled. We could also see this attitude, carefully hidden, in the modern rationalizations for the cremation of the dead...

It is interesting to note here that the fear of death has today been replaced by *the fear of... fear!* In this profound, psychoanalytically explorable, situation, only *the fear of being afraid* is now considered as the enemy. Indeed, this phobia for fear has been extended to *shame-phobia*, the shame of being afraid, thus extorting man’s submission from all sides. All the consumerist appellations of the current political correctness, which have fear as their second constituent, depend on these two postmodern phobias, which were surprisingly swept away by *pan-phobia* during the recent pandemic.

On the contrary, Orthodox theology treats death as a passage, as a *Passover*, with a *joyful sorrow* full of hope and patience – a concept that is mixed, sensitive, and therefore incomprehensible and untranslatable by the scientific imaginary, which accepts in all things an “incessant production of positivity”, and ultimately, as Jean Baudrillard has already diagnosed, a “leukaemia”<sup>27</sup>.

f) A sixth counterpoint has been expressed in the salacious praise that the scientific imaginary performs on *hyper-complexity*, valuing it as the rationalistic versatility within the univocal algorithmic realm. We are referring here to the highly elaborate exercise of an exclusively “*coded intelligence*”, as we would call it, which is precisely relishing in the autistic

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26. G. Gorer, “The Pornography of Death”, *Encounter* 5, 4 (1955), pp. 49-52. “An indicative feature of the more industrialized societies is that death has taken the place of sexuality as the dominant prohibition”. F. Ariès, *Δοκίμια για τὸν θάνατο στὴ Δύση*, transl. Karina Lampsa, Glaros Publications, Athens 1988, p. 188.

27. J. Baudrillard, *Ἡ διαφάνεια τοῦ κακοῦ. Δοκίμιο πάνω στὰ ἀκραῖα φαινόμενα*, transl. Z. Sarikas, Exandas Publications, Athens 1996, pp. 119, 84. See also Ant. L. Smyrniaios, «“Μιὰ ἀδιάκοπη παραγωγή θετικότητας”: Σκέψεις πάνω στὴν “λευχαιμία” τοῦ πολιτικοῦ ρασιοναλισμοῦ», *Τὸ Βῆμα τῶν Κοινωνικῶν Ἐπιστημῶν/Το Vima ton Koinonikon Epistimon* IH', 70 (2018), pp. 94-113.

mathematization of the world. The same spirit of novelty, which we had noted earlier, prepares and reinforces the encomium of complexity: the microscopic or telescopic scientific *super-interrogation* of nature<sup>28</sup>, would have been meaningless, if it did not ruthlessly excavate the surface of things, anxiously searching, behind the simple and the elementary, for the complex and the labyrinthine.

On the contrary, Orthodox theology seeks *simplicity*. Even the most philosophical of the saints were pursuing the blessed simplicity, immersing themselves in it, wishing to be surrounded and recognized only by it; it is a simplicity intertwined, of course, with *humility* and *non-interrogative* faith, words and concepts that also completely alien to the scientific imaginary, despite its occasional humbleness. It is the simplicity which adopts the spirit of mystery, approaching it with fear and gratitude, without ever interrogating it.

g) A seventh counterpoint lies in the fact that the scientific imaginary is always *extrovert*, while Orthodox theology is oriented towards introversion, towards “digging within”. Even if the first one excavates the brain and the mind through neurobiology or, as it claims at least, the human psyche through psychoanalysis, all its efforts are ultimately made to turning outwards both the man’s mind and the psyche,

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28. Sp. Kyriazopoulos has succinctly described the process of this hyper-interrogation of nature: “The magic act of physics is called *experiment*. By definition, an experiment interrupts the natural continuum, i.e. by examining the behavior of a thing in an abnormal way. With the experiment, the mathematical thinking of natural science becomes active. Instead of simply recording the given observation, it *provokes* it. Somewhat like an extreme mystical mood, this thinking ‘teases’ nature. To experiment is to *tease*, i.e. it always means temptation. Nature subjected to experimentation does not ‘*speak*’, as it is accustomed to do, but ‘*reacts*’, i.e. takes a stance towards the one who irritates it. This fact is of great importance for physical and metaphysical knowledge; it reveals to us that nature subjecting to scientific scrutiny is *only one aspect of nature*, only the way it reacts to a technical challenge. Just as the person who is facing with a temptation expresses himself somewhat abnormally for his habits, i.e. it behaves according with the demands of the conjuncture and therefore suspends his interests, in the same way nature observed scientifically does not reveal to us its core, but an authentic although abnormal, expressive possibility”, Sp. Kyriazopoulos, *Η καταγωγή του τεχνικού πνεύματος*, Athens 1965, p. 52, see in: P. Gounelas, *Η κρίση του πολιτισμού*, Harmos Publications, Athens 1997, pp. 162-163.

decoding their enigma, paying homage to a manipulative clarity, which it claims to aiming at their *understanding*. This understanding, though, is not performed for its reconciliatory dimension, but with the clear purpose of complete *control*, in our modern society where everything is now dizzyingly surveyed.

The aim is therefore for the visibility, audibility, and narcissistic publicity to be ensured, with the peculiar *symbolic violence* which the latter exerts on people; however, this aim is totally incompatible with the precepts of Orthodox theology, the sanctified attendants of which “*κρύπτεσθαι φιλοῦσιν*”. Moreover, the latter believe that such an extroversion is counted among the very possible dangers of their inner spiritual life’s alteration, on which they are exercising with great effort and humility<sup>29</sup>.

h) An eighth counterpoint was born out the fact that scientific imaginary celebrates the search for the new talents, the *young geniuses*, whom it will even attract from every corner of the planet to the metropolitan centers of science, offering to them fame and money to integrate them into its political-economic cogs, so that they can be used to further strengthening its territory. It is no coincidence that in schools, in the modern culture of youth adulation, they have been already cultivating and investing in the “little scientist”, but also in the “little historian” or “little philosopher”<sup>30</sup>. The mad quest for novelties now includes not only the

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29. The extroversion that some modern saints exhibit, who welcomed and benefited the thousands of their visitors, does not contradict or negate the internal, hard-toiled spiritual process they had already undergone. For this spiritually driven “extroversion” could be described as “the obedient and wise over-consumption of a surplus treasure, but as a divine imperative, not as a social necessity, consumer entertainment, relief, developmental activity, creative narcissism, novel outlet... Rather, it was the entrance and reception of human souls into the ‘coffers of God’...”. Ant. Smyrniaios, «Όταν είσαι κάτι περίσσιο, σὰν ἄνθρωπος, εἶναι ἀνθρώπινο; Όροι καὶ ὅρια μιᾶς εἰσόδου στὸν κόσμο τῆς ἐξωστρέφειας», in: *Ἐσωστρέφεια: Διαπίστωση καὶ ἀντιμετώπιση ἑνὸς νεοελληνικοῦ φαινομένου*, Akritas Publications, Athens 2008, p. 124.

30. Ant. Smyrniaios, «Φιλοσοφώντας γιὰ καὶ μὲ τὰ παιδιά: Όταν ἡ φιλοσοφία συναντᾷ τὴν Ἱστορία καὶ τὴν Παιδαγωγική», in: L. Duncker, Chr. Govaris (eds.), *Φιλοσοφώντας, μὲ παιδιά στὸ Δημοτικὸ Σχολεῖο: Θεωρία καὶ παραδείγματα*, Diadrasi Publications,

ideas and tools but also their actors. This revolution of youthfulness (as opposed to ageism) is born out of the sensuous premium on presenteeism and the consequent contempt for the past, subordinated of course to the character of all revolutions, with an even more radical worldview<sup>31</sup>.

On the contrary, Orthodox theology, following a long spiritual tradition that is shares with other religions as well, prizes the emergence of spiritual together with age maturity, except in rare cases, after exceptional practice and humiliation, without any extra offerings. The saint is in any case the elder, in the multiple, pastoral sense of the term<sup>32</sup>.

i) An alternative counterpoint arises from the fact that the scientific imaginary aims at serving not man, as it is misleadingly said, but his consumerism, by multiplying the pleasure of consumption. It serves hedonistic convenience, aiding the addiction to the painless convenience, exalting over man's novel will, propagating the elimination of all obstacles to the avenue that leads to pleasure, and eventually ending up in the post-modern *morality of taste*. Everything must be done sooner, faster, more scientifically, digitally, pleasurable, perfectly, and in the most consumerist fashion, constructing a complete, novel, *eugenic* program.

On the contrary, Orthodox theology is served by *asceticism*, that anti-consumerist and essentially ecological inclination of the world and man, advocating the painful difficulty, the pedagogy of the will, through e.g. fasting, vigil and prayer and various other physical and spiritual ills. These are practices and experiences that completely undermine and

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Athens 2020, pp. 81-99.

31. "Revolutions have exactly this characteristic: not only do they turn towards the future and give life to something completely novel, but they also construct an imaginary past, which, usually and in general terms, takes on negative characteristics... Today we know very well that the myth of the Middle Ages, as an age of barbarism, was exactly a myth, constructed by the culture of humanists and by the founding fathers of modernity". P. Rossi, *op.cit.*, pp. 22, 23.

32. The contemporary "disappearance" of the elder in the frequent complaints about ageism seems to be part of a religious political correctness, which simply promotes with characteristic intensity a libertarian intellectual, and not only, individualism, which does not want any commitment, emphasizing of course some extreme behaviors that, as a manifestation of the human condition, do not cease to exist.

negate the secular complacency, especially that of modern Western man, who now chooses to practice that strange kind of narcissistic malpractice called fitness, extreme sports, etc.

h) A tenth counterpoint is drawn with the speed of operation and unfolding of these two quantities. Scientific imaginary longs for vertigo, accelerates uncontrollably the bodies and souls of men, enjoys gazing at man in his manifold acceleration. Already with the Industrial Revolution, which Paul Virilio has called “*Dromocratic Revolution*”, “power will be invested in acceleration”<sup>33</sup>. This headlong rush is evidence of this radical centrifugalism, of the irreversible schizoid situation that overwhelms modern and postmodern man. He wants to escape from everywhere: from himself, producing a bunch of supposedly equally valid selves; from nature, ravaging every territory, aspect and idea of it; from other people, supposedly loving them undifferentiated and irresponsibly. As well-known thinkers have pointed out, this ever-accelerating man suffers from the “tyranny of trotting and motorism”<sup>34</sup>, the “inexorable and ludicrous conservatism of movement”<sup>35</sup>, he suffers precisely from an irrepressible “dictatorship of the movement”<sup>36</sup>.

On the contrary, Orthodox theology is not being self-deceived by any headlong rush; it is already operating and acting through the experience of *slowness*: the services are slow, the chants and prayers are long, the fasts are sometimes unbearably stagnant; the ascetic way of life requires an infinitely retarding preoccupation with things that proceed extremely slowly, working both within man and to its external environment, thus establishing patience as the greatest among the other virtues.

i) An eleventh counterpoint is related, in a fundamental way for both of these variables, to their expectations. Scientific imaginary aspires to establish *objectivities* through rationalizations, which must furthermore

33. P. Virilio, *Καθαρός πόλεμος, Μιά συζήτηση με τον Sylvere Lotringer*, transl. Ath. Drantzidis, Nisides Publications, Skopelos 1997, p. 50.

34. P.-A. Taguieff, *Παγκοσμιοποίηση και δημοκρατία*, transl. N. Kourkoulos, Ekdoseis Eikostou Protou Publications, Athens 2002, p. 75.

35. Al. Finkielkraut, *op.cit.*, p. 147.

36. P. Virilio, *Καθαρός πόλεμος, op.cit.*, p. 66.

be taken as indisputable, absolute certainties and, consequently, must forcibly imposed on the universe. Established within the exact sciences, it claims a universal and *legislative* character, establishing laws to trap people in their secularity, which sometimes is pitiless. It always and everywhere advocates the *positive*, in a specific way, of course, idealizing *positive thinking*, i.e. a new version of the old positivist conception of things, which, in any case, is nothing else than the validation of its hegemony. It seems, though, to forget and repress the fact that, according to Edgar Morin “every new positivity established in the world releases a new negativity, that everything that is complete causes a void, that every saturation brings about an agony, that the course of man is made through the dialectic of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, that progresses are transferring the human beings’ finiteness and particularity without diminishing them<sup>37</sup>.”

On the contrary, Orthodox theology constantly revolves around the axiom of *trust*, which, on certain occasions, gives birth to places and people, to *idiographic* certainties, i.e. free from objective constraints. The Gospel, moreover, is “the compendium and active manifesto of trust”<sup>38</sup>, that is, of the person-centered freedom, since the cosmological and anthropological condition to which it subjects us is one and unique: “*For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror*”. It is therefore trust in God, not the scientific decipherment of its mysterious character, that attempts to clarify this hazy, translucent landscape<sup>39</sup>.

1) Finally, a twelfth counterpoint is related with the extremely peculiar to religiosity phenomenon of *supplication*. Orthodox theology is not self-referential, it does not exhaust itself within its boundaries and conquests, even the “spiritual” ones, as is the case with the scientific imaginary; instead, it continually asks for the exalted assistance of Christ, Mother of God, and the millions of saints-mediators. Due to its entire structure and

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37. E. Morin, «Τὸ πνεῦμα τῶν καιρῶν», in: K. Liveriatos, T. Fragoulis (eds.), *Ἡ κοιλτοῦρα τῶν Μέσων. Μαζική κοινωνία καὶ πολιτιστική βιομηχανία*, transl. Amika Lykiardopoulou, Lena Zisi et al., Alexandria Publications, Athens 1991, p. 260.

38. Ant. L. Smyrniaios, *Ἰστοροῦμεν δι’ ἐμπιστοσύνης...*, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

39. *1 Cor.* 13, 12.

function, even when it analyses and synthesizes, it essentially supplicates and implores, by begging, always from above, not only concepts and words but the very capacity of doctrinal, ecclesiological, etc. analysis and synthesis. It unceasingly awaits God's mercy and compassion, whom he primarily *thanks* and *praises*, obeying the peculiar triptych of *praise*, *thanksgiving* and *supplication*, in which rests that liturgical invocations which seems paradoxical for the rationalist eyes: "*We are offering to you all that is yours for ever and ever*". Such a function of Orthodox theology is likewise utterly incomprehensible to the secularist scientific imaginary, in which there is no place for mercy, but only for power, often in its cruelest versions.

## Epilogue

Attempting to listen to and outline these twelve counterpoints between *scientific imaginary* and *Orthodox theology*, we think it is very likely that there are many more, which, as we've already noted, apply essentially not in our everyday life upon which we rest, reducing with characteristic ease "everything to everything", according to the crucial postmodern imperative<sup>40</sup>, but within the dynamic and rough field of holiness.

In any case, seeking a fruitful dialogue between these counterpoints and the contemporary dominant narratives of convergence and companionship, we must first of all note that it is an undermined conversation, externally and internally, precisely because of its power, long-term idolization and dynastic transparency<sup>41</sup>. Having been

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40. P. Kondylis, *Η Παρακμή του άστικού πολιτισμού: από τη μοντέρνα στη μεταμοντέρνα εποχή και από τὸ φιλελευθερισμὸ στη μαζική δημοκρατία*, Themelio Publications, Athens 1995, p. 64.

41. "For, what else is the obvious but that which resists any desire to justify its presence, i.e. its power, for it emits to those around it a heavy, narcotic rapture even to see it. For the obvious, although it is self-evident, is primarily "invisible"; this is due to an important property it possesses – the ability to parasitize. The transparency is parasitic on thought and the critical intellect; it is fed by its vitality, it simulates its desires, it coalesces with its techniques, it is adorned with its visions...". Ant. Smyrniaios, *Λατρεία και νεύρωση στην Παιδαγωγική της Καινοτομίας: σημειώσεις σε μιὰ μετανεωτερική*

intensively and systematically indoctrinated into being obedient to the scientific imaginary's territory, so that its word has become the most obvious, and therefore the dominant one, i.e. the current *word of the Lord*, they very easily slip into perceiving any different word as marginal, graphic, silly or, at times, even terrorist. That this dialogue is undermined, it's also dead obvious by the attempts of most of them to find multiple excuses and elegant or clumsy rationalizations to sanctify the techno-sciences and glorify their untainted face, which of course they cannot help but admit that it is now and then studded by some intolerable spots or "accidents" – quite unfortunately for their idealized estrus<sup>42</sup>. They first testify their credentials to the scientific hegemony's as impulsive subjects; then, at some point, it is possible to express reservations about its potential danger. Paul Virgilio has nevertheless pointed out that "inventions, the creations of scientists, are enigmas that expand the realm of the unknown, expand in some way the unknown... Science develops what is not rational... The problem is this: technology is an enigma. So let us study the enigma, not just the technology"<sup>43</sup>.

Still, this character of the scientific imaginary, always mysterious and irreversible<sup>44</sup> also constitutes the expectation of a radical rethinking of its

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*φιλοσοφία τῆς παιδείας*, Vivliopoleion tis Hestias Publications, Athens 2009, pp. 17-18.

42. For the enlightening conception of history, as uninterrupted and always positive progress, "the catastrophes of modernity – such as the two world wars, Auschwitz and Hiroshima, the colonial and imperialist wars, the destruction of the natural environment, the danger of a nuclear holocaust that will end the existence of the human species – appear as unforeseen accidents, as sad but marginal incidents in the ongoing Great Movement of Improvement". M. Löwy, *op.cit.*, p. 304. On the need for the compulsory inclusion of the accident in the modern "theology" of Progress, see also P. Virilio, *Τὸ προπατορικὸ ἀτύχημα*, transl. Vas. Tomanas, Nisides Publications, Thessaloniki 2005.

43. P. Virilio, *Καθαρὸς πόλεμος*, *op.cit.*, pp. 66, 67.

44. This mysterious, mystical character of scientific imaginary has already been explored in the case of algorithms which, as has recently been suggested by some researchers they participate, reproduce and propagate a powerful mythological framework. See J. Cheney-Lippold, *We are Data. Algorithms and the Making of Our Digital Selves*, New York University Press, New York 2017; F. Pasquale, *The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms That Control Money and Information*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. 2015; Ed. Finn, *What Algorithms Want. Imagination in the Age of Computing*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. 2017 and S.-H. Hong, *Technologies of Speculation. The Limits of Knowledge in a Data-Driven Society*, New York University Press, New York 2020.

hegemony: “for something to be mysterious means that there is work to be done, not only by the narrator, the author or the clergyman, but by the audience, the reader, the confidant. There is no end to the mystery, only another translation, another narrative...”<sup>45</sup>.

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45. G. Denning, “Writing, Rewriting the Beach. An Essay”, in: A. Munslow & R. A. Rosenstone (eds.), *Experiments in Rethinking History*, Routledge, New York – London 2004, p. 32.