
APOPHATIC THEOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY OF DIALOGUE AND COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVES

Peter Kondrla*

*Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Faculty of Arts, Department of Religious Studies,
Hodžova 1, 949 74 Nitra, Slovak Republic*

(Received 10 August 2015, revised 25 September 2015)

Abstract

The article analyzes two different approaches to understanding the otherness of the other. Apophatic theology approaches the other and its otherness with pathos, without naming or describing it with language expressions. Philosophy of dialogue expresses the respect to other through postulating into a subject which is unknowable, but must be respected, accepted and it is necessary to take responsibility for it. Both approaches – apophatic theology as well as philosophy of dialogue - provide certain perspective for communication between religions in terms of respect for the transcendence of the other and its otherness.

Keywords: apophatic theology, philosophy of dialogue, faith, transcendence, otherness

1. Introduction

Comparison of apophatic theology and philosophy of dialogue is unusual and rarely used method for the interpretation of the way leading from unknowability of God and his Face to unknowability and irreducibility of the Other to the object. In both cases, importance of a certain distance from the Other is emphasized. One of the most important results of the distance is the acceptance of the otherness-respect of subjectivity. Accepting otherness is also one of the key issues in postmodern thinking. But within the context of postmodern thinking, interpretation of otherness is not based on respect, but the absence of any principles and standards by which we could understand the value of the Other. The other and its subjectivity also points out the prospects for building social relations through the acceptance of otherness. Two approaches are available: tolerance of any acts or respect for a human being as entity that cannot be subordinated to anything.

2. Apophatic theology

World religions that have become a part of tradition in Europe, or at least they somehow influenced this tradition, have their specific forms of apophatic

* E-mail: pkondrla@ukf.sk

theology. These are particularly the religions of the Book – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the basis of religious tradition of apophatic theology, there is a dialogue between Moses and God in the Book of Exodus. Moses wants to see the God's Face. See the face means to know, to become close. It also means that I know the other, I know what the other wants to do and I am able to influence his actions through my communication. Knowledge, in the ancient context, is associated with an intimate connection, but also with the domination over the known entity. „So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. “ (Genesis 2.20) When man gave names to all animals, he actually got to know them – he understood their substance. He understood how they live, what they are for and what can be done with them. In other chapters of the Book of Genesis, the word ‘to know’ is used in two senses. The first meaning is the understanding or awareness of the state: „Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves” (Genesis 3.7) and after leaving Paradise „and Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bore Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord” (Genesis 4.1.)

In all different contexts of using the word ‘to know’ and ‘to realize’, a certain relationship which contains the domination or possession is created. This form of the relationship does not have only a negative meaning. In the intimate relationship of Adam and Eve, as well as in any other partnership, mutual owning is also the act of mutual commitment. Two people do not hide anything; they do not keep anything in secret. Their being is open to each other. There is no doubt that man desires to have a similar relationship with God. The aim of man is to surrender to God, to be accepted in God's inside, to be with God all the time, like spouses who want to spend every moment together.

Moses had similar ambitions. He wanted to see God's face, he wanted to know him. Moses wanted to ‘sit’ at the same table with God, discussing problems of the chosen people and seeking the best solution. Moses calls on God to become his friend, companion, counsellor, judge. He wants to see his face. – He (Moses) said: “Let me see your Glory!” He (God) said: “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion”. And he added: “You may not see My face, for no man see Me and live!” And God continued: “You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people — men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain — and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide

themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.” (Exodus 33.18 -23) (Some translations of the Bible suggest a less strict form of prohibition when they use the phrase ‘may not see’ instead of ‘cannot see’. This means it may not be caused by the limitation of human knowledge, but it can only be God’s will not to show his face.)

In God’s response, it is necessary to focus on the phrase in the last sentence: there is a significant difference of the word *may not* (or *can not*) in the meaning ‘being forbidden’ and ‘being impossible’. If Moses may not see the face of God, it means it is not impossible; it is not contrary to human nature. The reason why it is not allowed for man to see the face of God must be sought somewhere else. At the beginning of the Book of Genesis, God walked in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve had to hide themselves because they were naked. Therefore man was not created being unable to meet God and speak with him face to face. And yet, Moses cannot or is not allowed to see his Face. Paradoxically, a few lines above, Moses speaks to God face to face (Genesis 33. 11). Does it mean that once it is possible and once not? However, we will leave this exegetical problem aside for a while. In the next part of the article, we will discuss how this biblical prohibition or inability of man to look into the face of God, was reflected in the European philosophical tradition and how it affected specific forms of apophatic theology.

From the perspective of the biblical context, it is clear that God’s face is NOT completely inaccessible to humans. Therefore, we can assume that there are certain ways or conditions of human existence, where it is possible to have an intimate relationship with God ‘face to face’. If we think about meeting God within the frame of earthly existence, we will follow the path of mysticism, which is very close to apophatic theology. Or we can discuss this issue within the post-mortem context, but we have a lack of information about this level of human existence.

3. Two Neo-platonic approaches

It is obvious that within the European tradition of thinking, Plato is the closest one to apophatic theology. The idea of mimesis points out that the arts, including literary works, is imitating the perfection of Ideas. This means that one is not able to adequately demonstrate the Idea or to talk about it in the way that it is present for an observer. Ideas are not reachable for man, they are not subject to time and space limits as man. If we replace the word Idea with the phrase ‘God’, it is clear that his being is transcendent and we are not able to describe it in our language. Language is a result of the creation of Adam, when he named all the plants and animals. If Adam gave God a name, he would acquire power over God, he would know God. But God’s nature makes this impossible. At the same time, Plato believed that one can know ideas through his mind, because the soul pre-existed in the world of Ideas before entering the body. Through the way

of anamnesis, getting out of the cave of shadows, one can remember what the soul experienced before joining the body. One is able to retroactively reflect the experience with the world of Ideas. This opens up space for various interpretations of God in the context of Platonism [1].

The first method is mimesis. Based on the experience with variable matter and world order, we can conclude that behind all, there are perfect and unchanging Ideas or God. We talk about God in pictures. We give him with attributes that come from the limited world that God created. Such language is quite similar to everyday religious practices. We invoke God to help us, we pray to him with the words we use in secular language, we show him on pictures, we build temples, we worship and we do sacrifices that have value especially for us. God has become part of our daily lives; He lives with us, although He is not part of our world. This approach to the interpretation of God is sometimes seen as inappropriate and derogatory. But for Christians, mimesis is not totally strange, because Christ actually adopted the human body. Temporarily, God became a part of our everyday, timely and spatially limited reality. In terms of the philosophical formulation, kenosis is becoming a problem.

The other way is anamnesis - recalling the world of Ideas and our experience with it. In terms of interpretation of Plato, we must say that mimesis is not for everyone, but only for those who are able to lead their mind philosophically into rediscovering and the true knowledge. Those able to follow the way of mimesis are exceptional. Some of them are really convinced about their own excellence associated with the right knowledge. Especially Gnostics believed they were the owners of true knowledge. Although there were more Gnostic philosophical currents and forms, which together significantly influenced the development of Judaism and Christianity. The term 'Gnosticism' appeared later, in the 18th century. It is a technical term for religious movements, sects and different schools in the first centuries AD, which were aimed at achieving gnosis [2]. Gnosis was not understood as knowing the reality, but as a way of achieving salvation [3]. Gnostics also believed that, due to their knowledge, only they can be saved.

Gnosticism is also important from one specific point of view - it mentions God with no face. This can be understood as the basis for apophatic theology on the one hand, as well as the conflict with the philosophy of dialogue on the other. „For the Gnostics, God was totally transcendent – unknown God who cannot be identified and recognized in a human way, cannot be captured by human concepts. They call him Imperceptible, Incomprehensible, Unviewable (Naasene tractate, Hippolytus). The Gnostics consider the deity to be trans-secular. God's nature is completely out of this world and the universe. God has no name – this would otherwise mean that he is created, because only created entities have names. It is God without being. God originally formed the Pleroma - unity, from which celestial beings – aeons – emanated. From the fullness of God, one or more beings emanated.“ [3, p. 20]

Tendencies of the philosophical interpretation of faith, God and possibilities to know Him finally created an environment in which the real and experienced faith became secondary. Conflicts about God and his being in the philosophical sphere began to constitute a serious threat for the Church. This led to the convening of several councils, which were aimed at resolving the problem how to describe God and the relationship of the world to him. Due to the attempts of philosophical description of God, a number of complex schools and learnings, which made it impossible for man to know God, were established. In some cases of Gnosticism, one even lost the chance for salvation. The complexity of philosophical doctrines came into conflict with the idea of a simple life based on Christ's message of love. Love is the basis of moral principles that one follows. By respecting and fulfilling moral principles, one creates a fair society and the kingdom of heaven down here on earth. In our opinion, it was a conflict between the complexity of philosophical and theological learning and simplicity of Christian life, which initiated the development of apophatic approaches in theology. The aim of apophatic theology is, among other things, to bring back an intimate and immediate life with God – it is like entrance to the Platonic world of Ideas, but here on Earth.

4. Christian forms of apophatic theology

One of the first and most important thinkers who developed some ideas of apophatic theology in the Christian context, was Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. The starting point for his thinking was the Old Testament image of God who comes into the darkness and also the philosophy of Neo-Platonism, which was adopted from Proclus. He was inspired by Proclus's idea of emanation, but he interprets the ontological status of individual beings that are the product of emanation [4]. According to Proclus, emanated entities exist at different distances from God and thus they are becoming also less perfect. God's presence in these levels of existence is smaller than in the levels of more perfect entities. This fact is also analyzed by Pseudo-Dionysius when he assumes that God cannot be present at different places in different intensity. In the most remote emanated entities, God is even not ontologically present. Therefore, he claims that God is present everywhere, it is the unity of all degrees of perfection. At each level of emanation, God is currently present in such a perfection that is given to the particular stage. By this, he avoided not only the dualism, but he also eliminated the danger of various levels of God's existence, which he considered as being united. Individual emanated entities participate in the perfection of God, because they come from him. The closer they are to God, the more intimate (direct) relationship they have.

By the way of anamnesis, one can come closer to God (through emanated entities) and can talk about God in metaphors. One uses words that refer to beauty and perfection of created things in everyday life. At the same time, Pseudo-Dionysius is aware that we cannot fully describe God with these terms. God is more than a being to which we are bound. God exists above all names

and cannot be named. Despite this, Pseudo-Dionysius wrote a work, in which he dealt with the issue of the Divine Names [5]. Why should we talk about God, why should we try to give him names if he cannot be named? We are like children in our relationship with God. We are not able to see God face to face, we cannot focus our cognitive skills on God, in order to reveal his complexity. And that is why God dresses in clothes, colours and symbols that allow us to recognize at least a part of his beauty and perfection. In this way, we realize God's perfection, but also the scarcity of our knowledge about our relationship to Him. Therefore, he also provides another way - the mystical one. But it is not a gnostic way reserved for the chosen one and that is why man can create a relationship with God. This relationship is not mediated through language characters, but it is a direct, imminent, almost like a face-to-face relationship (but not in the sense as it was used by Moses at the beginning of the text).

Using a negative way to follow God means that we try to purify our language we strive to create an immediate and authentic relationship with God [6]. There is a lot of language expressions needed to praise God, to celebrate beauty and diversity of his creation, and to thank him in different ways for all the good things we have been given. But the aim of human existence is not only to praise. Praise, prayers or thanks giving are only means used to establish a direct relationship with God. It is about creating the unity. The idea of unity in God also refers to another author who used apophatic theology – Nicholas of Cusa [7]. He speaks about the 'learned ignorance', a form of understanding of the situation. Learned ignorance does not attempt to know what is not within its powers – in this case, it is God. Man is able to know God only through diversity of language expressions. But they are based on opposites (contrasts), similarly as it is described by Derrida [8]. We can talk about God only in terms and expressions that refer to what he is NOT. Learned ignorance tries to abandon these limited terms and seeks an imminent unity with God. This unity is not fulfilled through multiplicity of objects and expressions, but unity and simplicity, without the need to differentiate God into various acts, products or characteristic features.

Unity constitutes an essential pillar also in thinking of Meister Eckhart (Eckhart von Hochheim). His thinking is focused on one that is all, creating the unity. Philosophical interpretation of this basis logically leads to pantheism, but Eckhart's pantheistic approach is not meant to deny God and his features that are used by theology in argumentation. Eckhart's interpretation of thinking must be guided through the way of apophatic theology that leads to the absolute, in which diversity and plurality coincide. The absolute as unity is not only a goal of our spiritual efforts to make unity with God, but also the objective of our knowledge. Search for truth and efforts to know God must go hand in hand with getting closer to God. If thinking leads us to a multiplicity of expressions, it creates a barrier between man and God, which complicates the way to reach unity. Creating unity with God means also to leave the tools used by man on his way to God. It is similar to Wittgenstein's advice to throwaway the ladder of instructions - only after this purification, we can take our place in the truth.

Despite the fact that Eckhart is known as pantheist, he makes certain difference between God and the created nature, as well as between God and man, and all other that exists. Man is created by God and his unity with God must be reached with the help of his own efforts and actions, but also through the purification of his knowledge –ability to understand that our expressions are not sufficient for knowing God. God is a pure being and the aim of man is to make unity with this initial being. Man can know God. He can make unity with him. These ways are in mutual correlation and they have certain obstacles. A barrier to a proper recognition of God is the creation of new concepts and expressions, with which we describe God and we create a big picture of our ideas. The obstacle on our way to make unity with God is sin – it is a barrier which, similarly to number of phrases and symbols, moves us away from the way towards unity with God [9]. Confidence in language leads man to believe that he is able to know God and to reveal his essence with own efforts and intellect. But with this knowledge, one does not integrate himself into God's unity, but incorporates God into his own concept of knowledge, into the image of the world created by man. Thus, human experience of the world may become synonymous with his experience (i.e. 'experiential epistemology') of the divine [10]. Similarly, sin is like NO said to God – rejection of moral order established by God. Man wants to be a master of the world; he wants to command God and not to obey his orders. Creation of unity with God is the creation of an undifferentiated unity that cannot be described with terms used in depicting our own experience.

Apophatic theology responds, as we have shown, to various problems which arise when man wants to speak about God, when he wants to interpret him through the words that are used to describe the experience with created objects. At the same time, apophatic theology points out that philosophical language often seduces us to believe in unlimited perfection of our knowledge, which is so accomplished that it is even able to know God. Immodesty of theological and philosophical language together with our belief in abilities finally led to the fact that religious life focuses on the knowledge of God, speaking about God, interpreting God and his plans, explaining God's commands. But there remains a large space for deep, direct, intimate and imminent relationship with God, the intimacy of unity which is a sense of human existence [1]. Similar as what Augustine said – my heart is restless until it rests in You.

5. Apophatic roots in the philosophy of dialogue

Philosophical language may be a barrier for establishing an immediate relationship between man and God. Authors mentioned above were well aware of this fact. In the last century, the limits of human intelligence were reflected not only in the terms of inability to know God and speak about him. Unwavering faith in human reason led to world wars, totalitarian regimes, disdain of human dignity and a denial of fundamental values of human existence. But man finally realized that confidence in the infallible human reason would not bring him to

the goal. Many authors responded to this phenomenon - some of them reacted pessimistically, others wanted to restore the system of values, which was established before the Enlightenment period. But there were also some who tried to revive the idea of an unmediated unity with Being. This unity reveals the majesty of God, his unknowability, as well as the inviolability of the value of man and its irreducibility to a means or instrument.

Immediacy of essential relationship with God is also at the center of interest for philosophers of dialogue. Philosophy of dialogue was based on Jewish and Christian roots, especially personalism and Cosmology. It also reacted to questions about other person's personality. The 'other' was, and still is, in many cases, interpreted in the context of Cartesian philosophical egocentrism. Thinking ego is separated from the other Me. It is notable to communicate with him, to know Him, to understand Him or to build mutual relationship. An important consequence of this way of thinking is the inability of Philosophy, but also the inability of an individual, to conduct a dialogue. Philosophy as well as humans is set to monologue telling of great stories in which other people are implicitly present. The other human, however, is subject to a monologue model of the world in which the other person is only an object, as well as all other things. One of the founders of philosophy of dialogue is Franz Rosenzweig, who responds to the problem of unity of the world similarly as Pseudo-Dionysus. Rosenzweig, however, does not dispute with the Neo-Platonism, but argues with Hegel and his idealistic concept of identity. Hegel's idealism was characterized by an infinite sequence of dialectics which is enhanced within the context of the development of the spirit. But Rosenzweig focuses on unity, which is beyond the horizon of the worlds and behind the constant variability. Similarly to Nicholas of Cusa, he mentions the whole, in which all the contradictions are merged – it means that the dialectical process is completed. But we cannot create the whole of being in our consciousness, in thinking human subject. If we do it like this, it is an unjustified transformation of what seems, to a whole, but with no phenomenal form. And this unjustified transformation leads us to confusion and, finally, modifies our attitude to the other [11].

The whole of being is not represented only by the world, but also God and human. Their existence is differentiated and does not have substantial form, by which we could have interpreted our experiences with them. According to the Czech philosopher Jiřina Popelová, beings of God, world or man lies in the very basics of the whole experience as the last and, in advance, unthinkable reality [12]. In this sense, it is necessary to establish it as a basis of any ontological construction. This irreducibility of discrete parameters is, according to Rosenzweig, surveyed by the experience that thinking individual cannot overcome himself by any imaginary totality. His fear of death, which was supposed to be defeated by a self-hiding into an universal system, stubbornly persists similarly as a possibility to speak with the other about a practical relevance of this system. 'I' is an ordinary private subject; I is first and last name; I is dust and ashes; I am still here [11, p. 127].

There is no system that can save us from the horizon of our own existence, even if we created a perfect rational structure in which all worked perfectly. We may follow Kierkegaard's critique of Hegelianism here and notice his concept of "Christianity as 'existence-communication', rather than mere set of doctrinal formulations" [13]. Paul Tillich, too, "emphasized the paradoxical nature of religion and the necessity of personal experience [in which] ... personal relationship must be kept alive" [14]. Rosenzweig points out that man is afraid of his own subjectivity and vulnerability, and thus he plunges into the security of the system in which he is losing uniqueness and originality. His philosophical thinking is based on similar motives as apophatic theology. Philosophical concept of the world and God covers the view of man when he tries to look at the living person of God. In rational constructs, the only and personal God is replaced with 'God of philosophers' who is foreign and remote to human. Similar to philosophical system, it is supposed to help us get rid of fear emerging from the limitations of our own existence. Philosophical system can justify the totality, restriction of freedom and responsibility, even violence or murder. Totality of thinking and seeing the world as a system is a convenient way how to get rid of freedom and responsibility. Instead of man, it is the spirit, the system or the leader who decides. Man is freed from responsibility for his own decisions and from responsibility for others [15].

Totality, which stands between Me and You, is an important concept in the philosophical thinking of Emmanuel Lévinas. In his work *Totality and Infinity* (*Totalité et Infini*), he focuses on the question of totality, but not in terms of political system, but the totality of the entity (subject). Awareness of own being is the basis of any thinking. Totality of consciousness contains everything, even other You or God. Lévinas also points to the danger associated with the authors of 'via negativa'. Human mind has a tendency to systematize and to totalize the knowledge and the interpretation of the world. It gives God only such attributes that can be understood, but not those that God actually has. When one creates in his mind his own picture of God and the world system he builds a mimesis which he considers as a real being. But in the totality of consciousness, the moral dimension of human existence is missing. In this fictional world, God is subject to the consciousness, system and categories that were established by it.

Similarly as Rosenzweig, Lévinas's totality of consciousness is confronted with the finiteness of human existence or with the infinity which is not attainable for the mind. This confrontation between totality and infinity produces a new understanding of human existence. Human existence is happening at a given time. One cannot share his existence with others. Possibly under the influence of Heidegger, Lévinas speaks of solitude as the fate that is given to man in his existence. Solitude, however, finds its place in human existence only when a person removes himself from the totality of own consciousness that wants to take over everything. Similarly, because I cannot share my own existence, I cannot participate in the existence of another person.

It is natural that one wants to get rid of loneliness, but it is not the way of knowledge that can help. Logically, if a person does not want to be alone, he or she must enter into social relationships. But not through the manipulation and the dictation of the own vision of the system into which the others must fit in and must undergo the dictate of subjective rationality and totality. „Even in the most courageous and far-going knowledge, man does not enter the relationship with something really different. Knowledge cannot be a substitute for social relations, it is always and still solitude.“ [12, p. 58] Social relations which remove the solitude are not based on knowing other persons and the domination over them through rationality of a subject. In the context of social relations, Lévinas distinguishes between erotic and parental relationships. Erotic relationship is focused on the otherness, on the other gender. Parental relationship is a relationship to the Other who is different, but still kind of me. In the erotic relationship, it is not important if the other is characterized by particular attribute, but only the simple fact that it is different. In the parental relationship, I am aware of specific attributes of the other, and at the same time, I understand that these attributes are the basis of dignity and unreachability of the other.

According to Lévinas, transcendence is identified as infinity. Infinity elevates the subjectivity, it breaks all totalizing ‘magic spells’ – from Heidegger’s worry about being (existence of separated being, which is longing for exteriority, does not lie in the fact that it cares about being) to Hegel’s immanent eschatology of history and its judgment. Infinity calls each person separately to ethical life, to realize ‘the meaning without the context’. It places the human being before God’s judgment. Exteriority of the face or the Other is the key point of the emission of Transcendence or the revelation of infinity. The non-transferable meeting with it does not lead to the acceptance of any dogmatic content; it does not dispute the philosophical rationality. There is only a possibility to fulfill the requirement of any objective truth – thinking of what is beyond thinking. And because this possibility of the contact face-to-face with what is, is the domain of true morality as a responsible relationship with the Other, Lévinas put the ethics first. Because only ethics exposed to the initiative of Transcendence can give the whole of philosophy a contact of with reality. According to Lévinas, morality thus presides over the work of the truth [12, p. 43].

According to Lévinas, the relationship between man and the Transcendence allows one to think what is beyond thinking. Apophatic theology reacts similarly - it tries to get rid of the concepts that mislead a human being when he tries to interpret the Transcendence using the tools that he created himself. A significant shift of Lévinas way from apophatic theology is positing ethics as the basis of objective truth. Man does not create a relationship with God or the Other on the basis of knowledge, as we mentioned above, but on the basis of morality. Interpretation of Transcendence through categories of human or philosophical knowledge is mediated through a description made within a limited view of human rationality. However, authentic relationship with God and

the Other is possible only on the basis of imminent meeting with exteriority that cannot be transformed into the consciousness of Self.

Lévinas, like other thinkers representing apophatic theology, remains in such a relationship with God, which cannot be defined. Human being is standing in front of the majesty of transcendence, he surrenders, and he renounces a claim to understand and interpret this relationship. Philosophy of dialogue, particularly in the interpretation of Lévinas, as well as the apophatic theology, emphasizes the moral and authentic dimension of this relationship, in which the unknown, unseen and impenetrable is present.

6. Conclusions

A comparison of these two approaches – apophatic theology and the philosophy of dialogue – implies following conclusions. Tendencies to rationalize faith are associated with all religions, not only with the religions of the Book. Improvement of knowledge and especially the development of philosophy gave us a certain belief that man is able to know everything and can reveal any secrets. The consequences of this conviction are manifested in the creation of fictions about human capabilities which manipulate with the reality, other person or God. The danger of rational speculation was analyzed by several authors. Due to speculations, there is ‘a wall of characters’ built between man and God. And these characters cannot fully represent God. Rationality is not a reflection of reality, as well as logic. Both rationality and logic represent a certain system of communication and language - man tries to draw God into these systems, but God is beyond language [8, p. 32]. Through rationality and language, man tries to totalize his own experience, the Other and God. Rationality leads to the manipulation with reality within the belief in perfect knowledge and unlimited validity of logic [15].

Apophatic theology points to the transcendence of God and to the inability of our language. In this article, we have shown that dialectics of our logic can perceive things within their diversity, on the basis of their differences, but not through holistic unity in which all opposites merge into one. When we speak about God, it is a silence in fact. A silence, which is not internally differentiated and it is best able to represent God, of course, within the intentions of the contrast with our speaking. Philosophy of dialogue pushes the dimension of silence into the wider context in which a moral dimension of the relationship between Me and You appears. Moral aspect refers to the responsibility for the Other and it develops more the dimension of moral activity rather than cognitive passivity.

The above mentioned ideas are currently very relevant, especially in relation to the development of new forms of postmodern spirituality that has experiential character. Philosophical and rationalistic discourse was characterized by efforts to subdue God with language and logic. For the current discourse of experience, it is typical to experience the presence of God - man feels blissful, he speaks languages, heals or does miracles. Experiential

relationship with God, however, similarly as a rational relationship, ignores the moral dimension, which is emphasized by the philosophy of dialogue. It turned out that as a rational way of creating human relationship with the Transcendence leads to the creation of its caricature, then empirical pursuit to get closer to the Transcendence through the immediate experience creates an illusion that arises in the context of limited possibilities of human thinking and experience with the reality, which we endeavour to apply to God [11, p. 145].

Acknowledgement

This paper is the outcome of the Research Project titled Kierkegaard and the Crisis of the Contemporary World (Goethe Universitat Frankfurt Am Main) and project VEGA 1/014413 'Sign and significances of values'.

References

- [1] M. Valčo, R. Králik and L. Barrett, Communications: Scientific Letters of Zilina University, **17(2)** (2015) 103-108.
- [2] P. Pokorný, *Píseň o perle*, Vyšehrad, Praha, 2015, 14.
- [3] R. Sarka, *Gnosticizmus v modernej kultúre a novej religiozite*, Verbum, Ružomberok, 2015, 12.
- [4] A. De Libera, *La philosophie medievale*, Presse Universitaires de France, Paris, 1993, 128.
- [5] Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 1980, 120.
- [6] A. Blaščiková, *Zlučiteľnosť tolerancie a lásky k pravde v kontexte myslenia Tomáša Akvinského*, in *Diferencia a tolerancia*, UKF, Nitra, 2011, 144.
- [7] J. Hopkins (ed.), *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Nicholas of Cusa*, Banning, Minneapolis, 2001.
- [8] J. Derrida, *How to Avoid Speaking: Denials*, in *Languages of the Unsayable*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1989, 3-70.
- [9] M. Pavlíková, Eur. J. Sci. Theol., **11(3)** (2015) 191-200.
- [10] M. Valčo and K. Valčová, Communications: Scientific Letters of Zilina University, **16(3)** (2014) 25-28.
- [11] F. Rosenzweig, *Der Mensch und sein Werk. Gesammelte Schriften III*, Martinus Nijhoff, Dordrecht, 1984, 86.
- [12] J. Poláková, *Filosofie dialogu (Rosenzweig, Ebner, Buber, Lévinas)*, Ježek, Praha, 1995, 42.
- [13] M. Valčo, Eur. J. Sci. Theol., **11(5)** (2015) 129-139.
- [14] R. Králik, Eur. J. Sci. Theol., **11(4)** (2015) 179-188.
- [15] R. Králik, Eur. J. Sci. Theol., **11(3)** (2015) 183-189.