

THE ONTOLOGICAL APPROACH IN ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY

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Abstract

The materials of the article are based on the issues revealed in the discussions enclosed in the Lynn White's article titled 'Historical Roots of the Modern Ecological Crisis' in which the author dwells upon the origins of the ecological crisis in a number of provisions of the Bible and the instructions of mainly Western Christianity. The research highlights three main areas from which the White's critics tried to refute his claims, i.e., a more careful and deeper interpretation of the instructions of the Bible (1), the insight into cognition and technical activity having not only destructive, but also positive effect (2) and the effort to introduce new paradigms of the Christian attitude to nature (3). The authors of the article suggest to supplement the analysis of the arguments, expressed in these positions, with the ontological approach based on the understanding of the relationship between the entity and the being. Based on this approach, certain provisions of the Bible and the Christian worldview were interpreted, as well as the authors' version of the solution to the issue of the consequences of the technological activity of the mankind, bioethics and sociology of medicine.

Keywords: ecotheology, provisions of the Bible, ecological crisis, technology, human physicality

1. Introduction

Ecotheology or ecological theology is considered to be one of the modern trends in both theology and philosophy of religion. The issues of ecotheology should be distinguished from the issues of the ecology of religion and from those disciplines of the liberal arts area related to ecology, such as environmental ethics or ecological worldview. As suggested by Ernst M. Conradie: "Ecological theology is not only concerned with ethics but also with Christian doctrine. It is not narrowly focused on a reinterpretation of creation theology, but calls for a review of all aspects of the Christian faith – the trinity, God as Father, creation,

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humanity, sin, providence, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the church, the sacraments and Christian hope. Contributions to an ecological theology cover a wide range of other themes and sub-disciplines too. Almost every aspect of Christian theology has come under the spotlight: Biblical Studies, Biblical hermeneutics, the history of Christianity in its many traditions and forms of expression, Christian virtues and values, preaching, ministry, pastoral care, Christian education, Christian mission, and a theology of religions” [1, p. 3]. Thus, ecotheology is an integral direction of the modern theoretical component of religion and religious studies. It emerges as the important direction of modern theology and as the area of attention for philosophy and philosophical theology as well [2]. Unlike ecotheology ecology of religion, being a relatively new direction of religious studies, regards religion in terms and in the context of an ecological approach thus focusing on the study of how the main components of religion and religious cults manifest the relationship of humanity with the ecological factor of social life: “By removing the external attributes of a religion, suggested by environmental adaptation and historical process, we may arrive at the basic ideas and values of that religion. A more profound view of the intrinsic values of so-called primitive religions will, I think, provide us with a key to the understanding of those great religious traditions that are dominant today” [3, p. 224]. Ake Hultkrantz developed and promoted similar ideas in a number of his publications [4; 5]. We consider it is reasonable to draw attention to the differences between ecotheology and ecology of religion, as there are publications where they are not distinguished.

The emergence and spread of ecotheology is largely determined by the state and manifestations of the modern ecological crisis, although a rather direct factor in its rise and development became a well-known publication of Lynn White. He gave a lecture on December 26, 1966, called ‘The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis’ at the Washington meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, that was later published in the journal *Science*. White’s article was based on the premise that ‘all forms of life modify their context,’ that is, we all create change in our environment. His ideas were considered by some to be a direct attack on Christianity and set off an extended debate about the role of religion in creating and sustaining the West’s destructive attitude towards and exploitation of the natural world [<https://voiceofindia.me/2019/07/11/the-historical-roots-of-our-ecological-crisis-lynn-white>, accessed on 11.07.2019].

Both Lynn White himself and a number of his followers considered the well-known Bible provision to be the basis for such a statement: Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness, so they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move on the earth” [<https://www.bible.com/uk/versions/111-niv-new-international-version>, accessed on 11.01.2020]. And then the order followed: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish in the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon earth”

[<https://www.bible.com/uk/versions/111-niv-new-international-version>, accessed on 11.01.2020].

In his lecture, White, referring to the above provisions of the Bible, stated: “Christianity, in absolute contrast to ancient Paganism and Asia’s religions (except, perhaps, Zoroastrianism), not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his proper ends” [<https://voiceofindia.me/2019/07/11/the-historical-roots-of-our-ecological-crisis-lynn-white>, accessed on 11.07.2019].

We must pay attention to the fact that Romano Guardini, who, to some extent, can be considered White’s predecessor, in his book ‘Das Ende der Neuzeit’ [6] derived the ideology of human activism towards nature from the ideas of the Renaissance, which had not yet gone beyond the basic dogmatic truths of Christianity. In his reasoning Lynn White, following the similar position, contrasts the activist and consumerist attitude to nature, the roots of which he sees in the Judeo-Christian worldview, to the attitude to nature on the behalf of pagan religions and cults, as well as the Eastern, that is, Orthodox Christianity. He claimed: “The Greeks believed that sin was intellectual blindness, and that salvation was found in illumination, orthodoxy – that is, clear thinking. The Latins, on the other hand, felt that sin was moral evil, and that salvation was to be found in right conduct. Eastern theology has been intellectualist. Western theology has been voluntarist. The Greek saint contemplates; the Western saint acts. The implications of Christianity for the conquest of nature would emerge more easily in the Western atmosphere” [7, p. 1206].

Thus, the ecological crisis, according to White, is caused by the Western perception and implementation of certain ideas of the Bible, which for Christians have the character of divine guidelines. The main role in the ecological crisis, as reported by White, was performed by science, technology and technological inventions of the mankind, as White states: “I personally doubt that disastrous ecologic backlash can be avoided simply by applying to our problems more science and more technology. Our science and technology have grown out of Christian attitudes toward man’s relation to nature which are almost universally held not only by Christians and neo-Christians but also by those who fondly regard themselves as post-Christians” [7, p. 1206].

2. Ecotheology’s response to accusations that Christianity is complicit in the modern ecological crisis

The publication of White’s article, as mentioned above, enhanced a rather active discussion around this issue and contributed both to the emergence of ecotheology and to paying special attention to what kind of attitude towards the environment was cultivated by various religions and religious cults. The counterarguments of critics of White’s position were expanded at several directions.

Firstly, White’s critics considered it necessary to clarify the biblical provisions given by God to the human and accepted as the truth in the traditions

of Judaism and Christianity. In the selection of materials made by James D. Burke [<https://bibleapologetics.wordpress.com/2011/01/30/is-christianity-responsible-for-the-ecological-crisis>, accessed on 30.01.2011], the views of a number of the authors who unanimously disagree with the fact that Bible gives the human anti-environmental instructions are presented: “Against an unbalanced view resulting from looking at only a few texts, the value of Biblical environmental instructions has been widely acknowledged. Stewardship is a recognized Biblical teaching and Christian tradition, against the claim that Christianity is inherently destructive. Many environmentalists have identified the value of religion to ecological concerns” [<https://bibleapologetics.wordpress.com/2011/01/30/is-christianity-responsible-for-the-ecological-crisis>, accessed on 30.01.2011]. The author of the publication names Jeanne Kay, John Rayner, and Thomas J. DeWitt being the supporters of the latter position. We can as well add Don Brandt, Whanyung Kim, Desmond A. Gillmor, Anne Clifford.

Another view of criticism of the White’s vision presents the latter as an overly simplified model that does not quite adequately define the influence of the Judeo-Christian religious tradition on the course of history and the current ecological crisis. In the publication devoted to the debate surrounding this question, the White and Moncrief’s ideas are compared and the conclusion is drawn as follows: White proposes a simple model that can be explained thusly: Judeo-Christian tradition led to anthropocentrism, which led to the marriage of science and technology, ultimately resulting in environmental degradation. I do not believe Judeo-Christian tradition had as direct an effect on the current ecological crisis, and feel this model is flawed as there are a lot more contributing factors White fails to take into account. In Moncrief’s article [8, p. 511], he suggests an alternative to White’s model that illustrates Judeo-Christian tradition’s more indirect contribution to the current ecological crisis. Moncrief’s model suggests that Judeo-Christian attitudes led firstly to Capitalism and the meeting of science and technology, and secondly to widespread Democratization. These factors resulted in a social shift, spawning urbanization, increased wealth, increased population and individual resource ownership. It is these variables that directly resulted in environmental degradation, though Moncrief does acknowledge that Christian attitudes did influence these factors [https://www.academia.edu/7752876/Judeo_Christian_Ethics_and_the_Current_Ecological_Crisis accessed on 15.03.2024; 9, p. 31-32].

Secondly, the critics of White’s viewpoint suggested to understand science, knowledge and technological activity not only in their negative manifestations and consequences, but in a positive sense as well, including in the context of a religious worldview: this idea was present in early Christian patristics and a number of scholastics likewise shared it. For example, Francis Bacon, who was a devoted Christian, compiled a kind of hymn to the unlimited possibilities of the human mind, knowledge and technical activity in his writings: “In 1603 Francis Bacon proposed a dominion oriented interpretation claiming the purpose of science and technology (the ‘natural sciences’), was to recover paradise by dominating nature” [<https://bibleapologetics.wordpress.com>

/2011/01/30/is-christianity-responsible-for-the-ecological-crisis, accessed on 30.01.2011].

Thirdly, there were calls for a certain change in the paradigm of the Christian relationship to nature, including on the basis of a finer specification of Biblical truths. This view is profoundly expressed by Alfred North Whitehead, Don Brandt, Matthew Fox, Rosemary Radford Ruether. Besides, in line with these calls, there are certain considerations of Markus Vogt, the professor of the Department of Christian Social Ethics of the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich (Germany), who emphasizes the need to develop the theology of hope: “The decisive consequence of a theology of hope is that the concept of development is neither to be stilled by a consolation of the hereafter, nor may it be functionalized linearly for socio-economic purposes. It is centrally about the cultural dimension, which defies easy comparability and socio-technical operationalization. This cultural dimension is expressed today in the scientific-interdisciplinary discourse especially in postcolonial studies” [10].

3. The essence of the ontological approach in ecotheology and its advantages

Accepting the arguments developed by the critics of White, we regard it justified to supplement them with the considerations of next ontological ideas, which might seem to help in perceiving and revealing of certain problems of ecotheology in new foreshortenings. The efficiency of this approach is based on several grounds.

First of all, early Christian patristics asserted that in everything created by God there is an element of good, which gives the existing moment ontological self-sufficiency and justification due to the fact that it simply is [<https://www.ecatholic2000.com/boethius/untitled-17.shtml>, accessed on 01.01.2000]. Subsequently, the Christian attitude towards everything that exists should not be indifferent or, moreover, destructive. The negative aspect, i.e., destruction and evil, according to Christian dogmatics, was caused by the wrong choice of the first people, only after violating the God’s order did, they discover the possibility of the presence of both the good and the evil in the world. After the fall, the human, endowed with free will, perceives the world and everything ambivalently, that is, in such a way that it can be turned both towards the good and the evil. The idea that the human is open to the perspectives of both good and evil is one of the essential in the Christian anthropology and worldview, so it does not exclude human tendencies towards the evil and destruction. Hence, the idea of the double role of Christianity in the formation of the modern ecological crisis deserves to be supported [11].

The peculiarity of ontology, as a philosophical science, is that it studies the entity in its relation to the being. In a rather well-known provision, Severinus Boethius subtly and accurately indicated that anything, in order to exist, must be in relation to the being, and in order to be exactly what it is, it must be in relation to the other entities: “Everything that is participates in absolute Being through

the fact that it exists. In order to be something it participates in something else. Hence that which exists participates in absolute Being through the fact that it exists, but it exists in order to participate in something else” [12, p. 14-15].

Similar considerations were developed by Martin Heidegger in his lectures on metaphysics, where he notes that the way to understanding the being cannot bypass the issue of the manifestations of the entity: “We ask about that The reason why exist entity are and what they are and rather not nothing is. We are essentially asking about being of entity. But How? We ask about the being of beings. We question entitys with regard to their being” [13]. In ontology, entity is understood as everything that is fixed by a human as the real presence of anything in our perception, though the precise entity, which has a whole series of properties, does not directly indicate that it is in relation to the being, since the being is not provided in it as its physical element. The being does not coincide with any entity, or even with all the entities taken together, although we cannot consider any entity apart from the fact that we recognize the fact of its being. Any content of cognition, for which we do not recognize the status of being, turns for us into an empty phantom or a false imagination. Therefore, the understanding of the entity involves taking into account its two vectors or projections, namely, one vector is aimed at the being, that is, at the whole, the total, in which it resides and acquires the status of a real entity, and the other vector involves taking into account the relationships of the entity with the other entities (further on, we will demonstrate how it works in explaining the problems of technology, bioethics and sociology of medicine).

In cognition and practical activity, in the absolute majority of cases, human deals with the entity, without asking the question of the significance of its essential status, that is, inevitably perceiving the entity in a limited way, leaving out of consideration a number of its essential factors and connections. Due to this, human knowledge, on the one hand, is always limited, and therefore should be open to further modifications, additions and improvements, and, on the other – it should be prepared in advance for unexpected consequences of its activity. Therefore, in their practical activity (including technical activity), since humans cannot know all the connections of the entity that they use as a tool, they can certainly get unexpected and unpredictable results of their activity. Thus, one can conclude that a human is always, both theoretically and practically, in an ontologically incomplete situation and cannot count exclusively on an unambiguous determination of the results of their knowledge and actions.

4. Ecological crisis in the context of the ontological approach in towards ecotheology

In the context of ontology, the ambivalence of the perception of reality and the consequences of human activity is due to the fact that the final states of the world are not open to human, and the meaning of the being as such is not open to them as well; the human, dealing mainly with separate or partial entities, seems to cut them out of continuous being, not paying attention to the deeper roots and connections of such an entity. Therefore, such a separate entity

necessarily opposes both the whole and other entities, denying or ignoring them in one or another way. Due to this, the human choice of the good can carry unnoticed or unforeseen negative consequences. The proper Christian worldview involves the awareness of such a state of affairs and the conscious directing of efforts to the maximum human-possible correction made at the beginning of history, i.e., in the presence of a possible choice between the good and the evil (between the entity and the destruction), a human should strive to affirm the good, respectively – the entity, the being and the preventing of evil. They should as well be motivated by the realization that in everything created by God there is an element of unconditional good. In this view, the present ecological crisis of our time shows that the majority of humans have not yet made such a choice, although they are already more or less aware of the real state of affairs with the ecology. The previously mentioned German theologian-moralist and the expert in the field of environmental ethics Markus Vogt, has recently noted with the just bitterness that ecology, “like no other science today, is so connected to the moral demand of a kind of conversion of our entire culture and does not claim for the function of basic orientation” [14, p. 53]. In agreement with ecotheology and in the context of its consideration of the ontological approach, it is possible to support the thesis that today ecology should acquire the status of a new religion. Only a real deep revolution in the humans’ consciousness will help save civilization from degradation and destruction. Therefore, the application of the ontological approach to clarify certain aspects of the emergence of the modern ecological crisis significantly expands and deepens our vision of this issue, it adds further grounds for criticizing Lynn White’s viewpoint. By this approach in particular, he persuasively warns us against one-sided and radical assessments and directs our cognitive and practical efforts to a more balanced and open attitude towards the phenomena we encounter in experience.

5. Ontological approach to technological activity

At the sphere of scientific knowledge related to technological activity the importance of the ontological approach can be manifested in several aspects. On the one hand, as the Fathers of the Church emphasized, since God endowed the humans with intelligence, their intelligence should also be perceived as the good (Origen, Clement of Alexandria, S. Boethius, Anselm of Canterbury, Roger Bacon, etc.), though it should be about the intelligence, and not about opposing certain partial kinds of knowledge to others, as well partial. Scientific knowledge, if it is not complemented by holistic orientations, is only partial knowledge, and therefore is able to answer the question ‘How?’, bypassing the question ‘What?’. In the simplest version, scientific knowledge lacks orientation to the final far-reaching goals, to the senses, while, at the same time, it is oriented to the meaning, efficiency and explanation of the partial through another partial. And the technological activity of the human in the context of the ontological approach can be perceived, for example, in the version of the concept of Friedrich Dessauer, who believed that by creating technology, humans only make visible what was hidden in the structure of the world: “A

technician faces a situation when a formulated issue, especially a very complex one, ‘finds’ its solution after long efforts, when it sometimes ‘comes’ in the form of “enlightenment’. This means the pre-existence of a thing in an ideal entity” [15, p. 118]. Thus, as the commentary says, “Friedrich Dessauer proved the existence of the supreme technical ideas that are not born in the human mind, they are only established, found by them in the world of ideas. Technical ideas are the thoughts of God, a manifestation of the bright mind of the Creator. The subject of technology can exist materially, and it can as well manifest itself in the world of ideas, in the sphere of possible being” [16, p. 150]. Naturally, Dessauer could not fail to understand that human production of technology cannot be equated with the methods of the divine Creation: “The philosopher draws an analogy between the God’s creation of nature and the human’s creation of technology, which is also an explanation of divine wisdom, the single plan of the God’s creation, though this plan is carried out by the human. However, the implementation of the plan runs into the inevitable overcoming of the natural limitation and the liberation from the restrictions caused by natural laws. That is why in order to implement the Divine plan, a human needs the third component, namely, the internal processing in the mind” [16, p. 150]. And the result of the internal processing in the mind will be “the contact with the ‘fourth kingdom’, i.e. with the transcendental sphere, where the predetermined solution to the technical problem is located. The responsibility for establishing the connection (contact) of the phenomenal world with the noumenal rests not on the entire invention in general, but only on its most important component, that is, on the internal processing in the human mind” [16, p. 150].

One should notice that in the given ideas of Friedrich Dessauer there is double ontology, i.e., there is the ontology of the entity that is accessible to the human in their real world, and there is the ontology of the transcendent being as the ontology of the ideas of the Divine creation of the world, and the philosopher is convinced that a human will be able to ascent from the spheres of the first-order ontology to the higher-order ontology. This kind of approach to technological activity may well be consistent with the ideas of ecotheology, though on condition that we accept this possibility. From the standpoint of a sober assessment of modern realities, it is unlikely that such a project, due to its idealization, will allow us to successfully solve environmental problems today. It is rather under the pressure of environmental activists and with the assistance of international legislation, through a series of reforms and changes, that one can possibly achieve what the ontological vision of the situation guides us to, namely, to gradually introducing the requirements to the technical activity of the mankind, which will take into account both the limitations of human knowledge and ingenuity, and the need to include in technical solutions the orientation to being, that is, to a wider range of problems and prospects for humanity. However, Friedrich Dessauer’s concept is of interest since it proves that human technological activity may not come into conflict with the nature, and, therefore, provides it with the strategic orientations discussed earlier.

In addition, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that it is hardly justified to consider technology as the usual and exclusively neutral. As is

known, Karl Jaspers made such an assessment of the technology. In his work 'The Origin and Goal of History', sorting out the positive and negative evaluations of technology, Jaspers expresses the following clear and unambiguous view: "These two radical positions are opposed by the third one. It asserts the neutrality of technology. Technology in itself is neither good nor evil, but it can be used for both good and evil. It itself has no idea, neither the idea of perfection, nor the diabolical idea of destruction. Both are derived from other human sources from which the technology acquires meaning" [17, p. 111-112]. In view of our previous considerations regarding the inevitable limitation of any entity (and technology is a certain entity in any case), it is worth noting, that it could be the one only in the case of its creation by God or if human technological activity was absolutely perfect. Nevertheless, Karl Jaspers' idea about the neutrality of technology has become tremendously widespread and popular, thus most Christians consider technology to be religiously neutral since it improves human life, eases people's work, multiplies wealth and does not contain any spiritual ordeals.

It is important to realize that the understanding of technology as a neutral means of human relations with the natural world transfers all responsibility for its negative manifestations to the human, since there is a statement that technology can be used both for destructive actions and for the good. Therefore, everything depends on the perfection of the human, their morality and skill, however, as we have already noted, the limitations of the human can hardly be overcome under the real conditions in which they are in both the natural and social environment. Hence, in our opinion, it is necessary to try to eliminate those negative consequences that technology can inevitably bring at the design stage, especially when it will be considered unequivocally neutral and not attach due importance to aiming it in a positive direction: only this kind of direction can ensure the maximum possible neutrality of technology, which will always not be final. One of the today's major issues of the environment is precisely this limited view, resulting in launching engineering inventions, the negative consequences of the use of which are not adequately understood and not neutralized. In the context of the ontological approach, technology, like any real entity, is doomed to the limitation and ambivalence of manifestations that must be realized and taken into account in the technological activity. Technology, unlike nature, is always connected with the human, that is, the ontology of technology is unthinkable without anthropology [18; 19]; it is the creation of the human, that is, a being involved in the knowledge of the good and the evil. Accordingly, human-made technology is ontologically placed between the poles of positive and negative. Here one can see the justification of Lynn White's thesis that technology will never be able to eliminate its own negative consequences. Although, in the context of the previous considerations, it can be stated that the task of the human is to make technology as neutral as possible, thus excluding (to the maximum extent) the harm that it can bring to the human and the environment.

6. Ontological aspects of the ecotheological interpretation in the spheres of bioethics and sociology of medicine

Rather interesting results of the use of the ontological argument in ecotheology can be traced in bioethics and sociology of medicine [20]. One of the pressing questions here can be the issue of whether a human can consider themselves the owner of their body and, accordingly, whether they can freely dispose of it. The issue of the transformation of the surrounding world by the human becomes especially acute when the problem of interference not only in the material processes of the world, but in the physicality of the human (in which natural factors also operate) arises. It is known that for quite a long time (until the 19th century) theologians were fundamentally opposed to such interventions. To tell the truth, this point of view was to some extent restrained and balanced by the Christian requirement to be merciful to the suffering, thus, medical assistance at the level of care for the sick was still provided. A new stage in the discussion of these issues begins in the 20th–21st centuries, when complex operations, blood transfusions, transplants, implantation (including chips), etc. become possible. Interference into human corporeality in different interpretations and discussions acquire a double meaning, namely, intervention in human nature (1) and intervention in a human's personal space (2).

In this regard, the story of the cells of Henrietta Lacks is worth mentioning. She got cancer and died of it, however, her cells, obtained during the operation, turned out to be uniquely suitable for laboratory research, they were very convenient, because they multiplied quickly in undemanding conditions, and they were used in the 1950s to develop a polio vaccine, and in the 1980s to understand the nature of HIV infection. Since Henrietta Lacks was an African American, and the HeLa cells were used for scientific and commercial purposes without her and her family consent, this event attracted peer public attention and a large number of interpretations (the right of the patient to dispose of the elements of his or her body; the reservation of the rights of African Americans; the attitude towards it, that human cells continue their life for 90 years after their physical death, etc.). Surprisingly unexpected interpretations of technological procedures are possible here – thus, the children of Henrietta Lacks perceived the division of her cells in laboratories after her death as a certain option of immortality. “To her grandson Alfred Lacks Carter, the most important thing about HeLa cells is how they have advanced cancer research – a fitting tribute, given that Lacks died of the disease. Many people have also told him that they were able to conceive a child because of in vitro fertilization, which was developed with the help of HeLa cells. «They were taken in a bad way but they are doing good for the world», he says. And they do so for people of all ethnicities” [21].

Intervention into human nature is most vividly illustrated by the modern cosmetology procedures. People tend to change the shape of their nose, the volume and outline of their body, the length of their legs, etc. In this context, cosmetologists can technically carry out various procedures, e.g., eliminate congenital defects (cleft lip, protruding ears), fight age-related changes in the

skin, carry out skin transplantation after burns, make piercings or tattoos. Only the doctor can understand how appropriate and safe these interventions may be, though, if the patient has the aspiration for changes, then, after the doctor's refusal, he or she can turn to semi-qualified 'specialists' who will agree to carry out the appropriate manipulation with the unknown consequences (the exemplifying cases are abundant).

Bioethics and bioethical law make an attempt to introduce certain frameworks regarding interference into personal space. The inviolability and preservation of personal space is provided for by the European principles of bioethics, namely by voluntary informed consent, respect for personal dignity, the principle of integrity and the principle of vulnerability [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf, accessed on 01.01.2000; 22]. The IVF (in vitro fertilization), surrogate motherhood, cloning and sex change are on the border between the first and the second areas of the issue. These procedures are connected, on the one hand, with certain technological possibilities, and, on the other – with the inner feeling of a human and his or her idea about the Self; and it is the inner requests of a human that determine the technological orders (the desire to have a genetically own child causes the request for IVF or surrogacy. Although technically it would be easier to implement adoption, it is the mentioned request from the Self that determines the development, use and improvement of the existing technologies).

And here socially ordered technological activity falls into the sphere of many 'yes-buts'. Technologically possible medical procedures are criticized by religions and church associations, by legislation (in many countries, these procedures are prohibited by law in one form or another), by the doctors themselves who consider these technologies insufficiently studied and advanced. It is somewhat paradoxical that the development and improvement of certain technologies is hindered by the same thing that protects them; for example, the requirement to preserve medical secrecy does not allow to follow the further fate of the 'test-tube children' and to keep medical statistics on the state of their health, the ability to study and procreation possibilities for such children. Thus, the desire to fulfill the divine instruction 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it' due to decisive technological interventions can lead to completely opposite consequences and to the fundamental impossibility of fulfilling this instruction.

Therefore, bioethics as an area of scientific knowledge strives to exercise control over the application of the technical capabilities of science by the scientists themselves in order to maintain an optimal balance between technical capabilities and the free flight of creative thought on the one hand, and the responsibility for the further consequences of such, perhaps not always successful, flight on the another. It is in this area that the application of ecotheology is possible, thus, no wonder that Catholic and Protestant theologians are actively involved in the discussion and interpretation of the bioethics issues (Ramon Lucas Lucas, Elio Sgreccia).

From the standpoint of the ontological approach to these issues, it is important to note the obvious contradiction that arises in these situations of

intervention, i.e., people who prefer to change something in their body or claim the ownership of its components [<https://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/16/magazine/taking-the-least-of-you.html>, accessed on 16.04.2006] do not pay attention to the fact that they are not the creators of either the anthropic type of living beings, nor the components of their bodies, nor of their components, for example, the genetic code or living cells. However, in the social context, the situation is considered rather differently as the principle of inviolability of private property and the impossibility of using data or components of the human body to solve wider problems affecting the human community or all of humanity, without the consent of the patients, emerge. On the other hand, generally speaking, in the relations of a human with the world, the act of appropriating something and, moreover, the desire to profit from something (including from the components of the human body) involve either the expenditure of physical energy or ingenuity. A provocative question arises – can a person believe that his or her body is the result of this, that is, his or her own efforts, and if so, to what extent? Another question is whether there is a limit to the intervention of medicine and technology in the human body. One gets the impression that such a limit either does not exist or is so far unknown to us.

In our opinion, when applying the ontological approach in the ecotheological understanding of these issues, the same question that appeared in our previous excursions should be in the foreground – are the actions and intentions of such interventions into the human body consistent with the general understanding of the being as the good, or will they be the planned actions leading to strengthening or destruction and degradation of the being? Accordingly, the orientation to the meaning, to the general state of affairs and to the long-term perspective should be a necessary element both in the evaluation of specific actions and in the theory of ecotheology and bioethics. And it seems possible to make sure that such a requirement is met in specific applications or technologies. It is not about ceasing the research of possible interventions into the human body when their distant consequences are unknown in advance, this is about what principles in such activity and in its interpretations, one should be guided by.

7. Conclusions

The authors of the research believe, that an additional basis for strengthening the position of ecotheology in its polemic with those who accuse the Judeo-Christian religious tradition of being involved in the emergence of the modern ecological crisis can be the use of the ontological argument in such a polemic, which involves making a distinction between the being and the entity. Taking this into account, it is affirmed that a justified understanding of any entity can take place only in the projection of the latter onto the whole, onto the being, onto the good, which is an important statement of ecotheology. The article asserts the priority of this technique over the human desire to pragmatically use the partial. This approach justifies itself in the interpretation of technology and technical activity of the mankind, as well as in understanding the

issues of bioethics and sociology of medicine. Today, the essence of the concepts of ‘ecological morality’ and ‘ecological ethics’ has changed, since to predict the consequences of our behavior for the environment intuition alone is not enough, it is rather high competence that is required.

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