

The entire book is a profound opportunity to reflect on the status of this field of study, on its central position in how we perceive Greek philosophy, the modern self-identity, and our irrepressible instinct to focus on novelties and separations in areas where documents show nothing but continuity. I imagine that, at some point, someone will write a wonderful chapter on the reception of medieval philosophy in Romanian culture, taking this book into consideration: a chapter that would show how much Brucker and other philosophy historians have been read in Romania, how much they have been referenced, that is: read, edited and transmitted, proving how much Romanian culture is indebted to the French and German passions for the construction of identity.

Translated from Romanian by Anca Chiorean

ALEXANDER BAUMGARTEN

alexbaum7@gmail.com

SANDU FRUNZĂ, *Fundamentalismul religios și noul conflict al ideologiilor* (Religious fundamentalism and the new conflict of ideologies), 2nd revised edition (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Școala Ardeleană, 2015).

Fundamentalismul religios și noul conflict al ideologiilor (Religious fundamentalism and the new conflict of ideologies), written by Professor Sandu Frunză (Department of Communication, Public Relations and Advertisement, Faculty of Political Science, Babeș-Bolyai University) was published in 2015 and it represents a revised and enlarged version of the 2003 edition. It offers a very exciting debate regarding two key concepts of contemporary society: “religious fundamentalism” and “spiritual regeneration movement”.

The study is structured in six parts, each with its adjacent chapters and subchapters. It begins by defining myth, religion and ideology in order to discuss not only the religious fundamentalist movements in the context of global relations, but also the way in which religion relates to ideology by pointing out the critical issues created by this relation: violence as a religious discourse, but also tolerance and multiculturalism.

Understanding religion as “a manifestation of the sacred”, Sandu Frunză analyses the way in which, in the contemporary world, it tends to transform into a rather “laicised cultural discourse” and even more so into a political one. Today, the ideological discourse greatly contributes to the individual’s “construction of identity” and to society’s “cultural memory”. The research thus pertinently shows that, in today’s society, there are two parallel tendencies: on the one hand, the phenomenon through which ideology transforms into a “secularised religion”, in which case the author offers Marxism as an example and, on the other hand, the process through which religion is given an ideological connotation that creates

fundamentalism, especially in the case of radical groups that define themselves as “religious regeneration movements”.

Today, this study represents an unprecedented attempt to define “fundamentalism” by answering the major questions the concept raises: 1. Which would be the correct term and status of religious traditions outside Christianity? 2. Would an “essentialist” definition of fundamentalism be legitimate? 3. Can there be a transcultural application of the term? Through his analyses, the author makes an ideal theoretical and applied endeavour and offers carefully documented case studies.

Due to modern man’s known need for recovering his mythical symbolic conscience, Part I (“Mit, religie, ideologie. Aspecte ale construcției simbolice a identității”¹) focuses on the revalorization of “the myth” and on its “rediscovery” within a “de-mythicised” culture, on the dialectic relation between myth, religion and culture.

Part II (“Ideologia ca religie secularizată și religia ca ideologie”²) assesses the way in which religion becomes ideology and the way in which our century compels a redefinition of identity by substituting religion as an ideology. Starting with humanity’s three great religions, Part III (“Aspecte ale fundamentalismului iudaic”³), Part IV (“Aspecte ale fundamentalismului creștin”⁴) and Part V (“Aspecte ale fundamentalismului islamic”⁵) analyse the ideological component of both a fundamentalist religious mentality and the way in which religious ideology can take the extreme forms of intolerance and violence.

Part VI (“Identități religioase, multiculturalism și ideologie în context global”⁶) contains one of the most interesting discussions in the book and it starts by offering as an example the relation between the institutions that the Romanian society considers most trustworthy: the church and the army. In a highly original manner, the author analyses the relation between religion and the religious discourse on the one hand, and the state and nation on the other, considering, for example, the connection between the Orthodox Church and the army within the Romanian society throughout history and the consequences of such a connection: sacred violence, self-identification and nationalist ideology. In this last part of the book, the author also analyses the relationship between politics and religion in the context of globalization, due to the complex nature of this theme; it is presented as an active participant in the construction of identity and in the validation of both the majority and the minority groups. The provocative reading of this book raises the

¹ Myth, religion, ideology. Aspects regarding the symbolic construction of identity.

² Ideology as a secularized religion and religion as an ideology.

³ Features of Judaic fundamentalism.

⁴ Features of Christian fundamentalism.

⁵ Features of Islamic fundamentalism.

⁶ Religious identities, multiculturalism and ideology in a global context.

question whether, in today's "new conflict of ideologies", there should be more emphasis put on how the mass-media, cinematography and technology in general can influence society's fundamentalist tendencies.

The author stresses the fact that a crisis of modernity also implies a crisis of identity and he is well aware of the difficulty of approaching such a subject from the viewpoint of religious ideologies. Throughout the discussion, Sandu Frunză constantly uses concepts and examples based on the dichotomies sacred / profane, synchronic / diachronic, religion / ideology, individual / nation, Marxism / fundamentalism, physical space / virtual space in order to show that, in the end, fundamentalism is "violence with religious motivations".

Translated from the Romanian by Anca Chiorean

RODICA FRENȚIU

rfrentiu@hotmail.com