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INTERDISCIPLINARY DOCTORAL SCHOOL
FIELD OF THEOLOGY

**GNOMES AND TROPOS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF SAINT
MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR AND COGNITIVE-
BEHAVIORAL PSYCHOLOGY**

SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

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ARAD
2022

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SUMMARY

A psychologist could motivate the whole approach and effort of understanding and improving the mood of the will (gnomes) and the behavioral state (tropos) of a patient in order to achieve psychic balance and avoid mental decompensation and its unfortunate result, decompensation. According to psychological terminology, what is generically referred to as "psychotic decompensation", that is, those acute episodes with a risk of chronicization caused by the loss of mental balance, by the inability to compensate for the mental balance through additional activities or external contribution of any kind, disorders caused by a sick or sick psyche as a result of will dispositions and disadaptive behaviors, neconforms with oneself and with the immediate reality.

A theologian could motivate the same approach from an anthropological and spiritual perspective, namely the understanding of the soul structure, the temptations and their effects on the psychic mechanisms in order to avoid the fall into sin and its result in time, the passion. We would clarify ourselves according to the language of orthodox spirituality: the loss of spiritual balance, of sanctifying grace and the powerlessness to get out of the passion and oppression of the evil one, without the help of the inner support of the faith that must be reactivated, as well as without the external support of the Church and of the saving instruments from which it benefits through the real and direct presence of Christ God who works in It.

Sure, the language seems different and differentiated, but the stated reality is not a different/categorically differentiated one because there is between these two sets an intersection, a common set. By the way of understanding and bending the research on the component parts this common set may be smaller or larger. But no matter how big or small this identified common set may be, that's where both the fall and the rise of the person comes from, regardless of which component set we look at. The dispositions of the will and the behavioral habits define both the psychic and the spiritual man, and in the case of their imbalances it is normal to act from both sides. More specifically said: you cannot treat a person's psyche without taking into account his somatic and spiritual state. The somatic state is handled by general medicine and psychiatric medicine in particular, and the mental state

is handled by psychology and not only. It remains, however, that "and not only" in the sense that human spirituality is particularly vast and complex. Seen from the other side, from the perspective of spirituality, the spiritual state deals with the spirituality of faith "and not only" because any authentic spirituality is not a disqualified spirituality, which does not take into account the body, but especially, and as the Orthodox Christian spirituality strongly states, man is seen as a unit of body and soul, a synthetic unity as we will see in the work that it also emerges from the theology of Saint Maximus. So, spirituality is in direct relation to *soma* and *psyche*. The body must be in bio-chemical equilibrium but also the psychic mechanisms must work at optimal parameters in order to be able to sample and speak of an authentic spirituality. Therefore, that "and not only" becomes defining, becomes the common crowd so important. An authentic spirituality brings the body and the psyche to a level of relative balance and vice versa, a healthy body and a psyche in optimal parameters create the ideal support for an authentic spirituality.

In fact, the concrete motivation of this endeavor is the man. Man is the common subject of both spiritual anthropology and modern psychology. Psychology wants him in a state of health, of compensation, of optimized balance and spirituality wants him deified with body and soul. For man's sake, not only these domains but all areas of the human are called upon to work together. When there is a person who has suffered multiple psychotic decompensations but who is brought afloat by the contribution of psychiatry and psychology on the one hand and of the prayer of the Church on the other hand, and then with the help of medication and psychological counseling, but especially through the authentic spiritual contribution generated by spirituality and the Mysteries of Biseri but it firmly maintains itself in a state of functional and spiritual psychic balance alike and avoids frequent relapses through decompensations and passions, at this moment all the concrete benefit of this collaboration is found. For a theologian, the motivation is clear: the love of God materialized in the love for the neighbor, image, and likeness of God.

The structure of the work is a systematic one, mirroring and attempting a mediation generated by the notions of gnomes and tropes between two fields that until yesterday were in some competition, competition arising against the background of tendencies

of empowerment: moral theology and Orthodox Christian spirituality versus cognitive behavioral psychology. The autonomy we refer to is the result of several factors: from the perspective of theology, of its moral and spiritual branch, there is a certain *delay/lag effect*, natural. The accentuated technological progress and the new paradigms require a time of settling, understanding and accommodating with the novelty of Christian morality and spirituality, which comes to give punctual, dynamic answers based on a static theological background, steadfast but always valid, always capable of an adequate moral response. Or, most of the time, until moral and spiritual theology comes up with solutions to current and acute problems, these have been overcome by society which, against the background of the speed of technological expansion or because of the paradigmatic changes generated by the new scientific conquests through which the world passes, generate new and new problems, before an answer has been given ethically/morally to problems already overcome by the dynamics of things. This results in a certain delay, although Christian bioethics gathers together first-hand specialists from different fields of human knowledge whose competence lies precisely through their direct involvement in the nature of change. Even these lay specialists, faced with discoveries capable of fundamentally modifying the common human background in the plane of existence, stop, sit at the table of ethical discussions in order to decant the moral benefit and the ethical legality of their actions. And from the perspective of psychology, this one, like any new science, has had to go through all the stages of becoming as a mature, well-defined and settled science, recognized among the other sciences. At least, among the medical sciences, psychology has always suffered from an inferiority syndrome. She had to turn to the whole range of empirical, statistical, functional ways and tools that would give her the status of authentic science and bring her recognition from the other sciences. Although it operates with the soul, with the variables of the human person that can only be quantified partially or from a certain angle. So there was an attempt to move away from everything that meant spirituality, from everything that could not be quantified in a certain way. This is how psychoanalysis becomes a secondary branch, in decline, and this is how the success of cognitive-behavioral psychology, gestaltism and branches focused on empiricism appears. The concrete result did not delay to appear: in this way psychology could become one of the

cognitive sciences. And all this effort was focused on becoming psychology as a science but, somewhat, to the detriment of the man, the beneficiary and the benefit to him. Nowadays things have changed. More and more humanistic branches appear in the psychological common trunk, branches that make use of all the authentic scientific gain that fundamental psychology has accumulated over time. Once the problem of the becoming of psychology as an outdated science, it can return to the object of its work: man. In this endeavor, psychology is forced to get out of autonomization as well, rediscovering all the other humanities, the contribution of which it can be used and to which it can make its own contribution. Among these sciences, Christian morals and spirituality can and must occupy an essential place. Psychologia understands more and more clearly that the support of faith cannot be overlooked because it represents a fundamental inner energy in acquiring and maintaining human psychic balance. All the effort sustained by an authentic man-centered start. And the signals of openness from current psychology to the other humanities are concrete and constantly developing. But moral theology is not outdone in the interdisciplinary approach, either. This is how a new discipline arises within moral theology: pastoral psychology.

The structure of the work is a simple one, of mirroring the two fields, psychological and spiritual, as well as of tracking and highlighting a common background generated by gnomes and tropes as cognition and behavior. Mirroring is carried out on several levels generated by the psychological mechanisms on the one hand and by the stages of the history of the salvation of the world as defined by the moral theology, on the other hand.

In the first chapter I tried an introduction to the meanings of gnomes and tropes following the classical, descriptive path, based on terminology. Therefore, I tried to prove that from the dichotomous perspective so specific to the thought of Saint Maximus, two distinct ontological planes are outlined, but which are in synthetic union (a union that respects the terms formulated by the Council of Chalcedon: without division or separation, without mixing or merging) and which influences at Saint Maximus even the terminology used in relation to them: the plane of being and the plane of existence or, in other words, the plane of the Logos and the plane of the tropes. Thus, the plane of being corresponds to well-specified terms such as: *ὁβσία*,

ὑποκείμενον, ἐνυπόστατον and, of course, *λόγος* and the plane of existence corresponds to another terminological set such as: *εἶναι, ὑπαρξίς, ὑπόστασις* and *τρόπος*. Then I tried to define as well as possible the meaning of the term *σύνθεσις*, the one so important in the theological system created by Saint Maximus, especially from the perspective of the meaning brought on other important terms: *φύσις* and *εἶδος* (nature and species). From the perspective of the theme we research, the explanation and understanding of these terms is essential. You have no way of understanding and being able to distinguish between the natural will that according to the reason of the being and the gnostic will that according to the reason of existence / being without correctly defining the ontological plans as well as the terminology that defines them. You can't penetrate the meaning deeply touched by the texts of Saint Maximus without taking into account the terminology used. And Saint Maximus is very accurate and scrupulous in expression even if one term or another knows a certain development over time and in relation to the issues debated at a given time. And in order for understanding to move on, some of the principles of existence created as defined by the theology of Saint Maximus must be defined. These principles include that of diversity (*διαφορά*) according to which, man means man and woman, or that a species does not define itself and cannot exist through a single individual. Otherwise we cannot have access to the meaning of the gnostic will, a will that in the plane of existence is responsible for this diversity of persons of the same species having the unique and unchanged logos in the plane of being. If we had just summed it up, it wouldn't have been enough. That is why we have passed the approach on an axiological and more concrete level, the anthropological one. Human nature is *λογική* and *θελητική* at the same time. Man is a rational and willing creature at the same time. Movement as a work and will as desire, are related to nature, and the way they unfold in the plane of existence belongs to the person and define the *tropos* as a synthetic whole of the way of existing at a given moment. Only now can we say that the gnostic will is directly influenced by the gnomes that detached from *ἔξις* once through the Adamic fall sin enters into the mode of existence through the "pleasure being", a being that is inherited by birth by the entire human race. After presenting the meaning of gnostic will and how it operates at the level of reason after concrete existence, I penetrated even deeper into the Maximian theological

system to understand the so complex notion of gnomes (τό τῆς γνώμης ὄνομα). The mission was not a simple one because the term knows multiple meanings that we have followed in the Holy Scripture, in the ancient philosophical writings, the ancient literature and finally, in the theological system of Saint Maximus in which the term, although it retains its original theological meaning, knows stages of development, is perfected and polished until it reaches maturity. Next, we presented the stages of the volitional process in which gnomes mix and influence it, and these stages were taken from the Saint Maximus system which in turn develops what he had known from the anthropology of Nemesius of Emesa. Thus, we briefly deal with these volitional stages: desire, research, acknowledgment, deliberation, judgment, choice and action or the final impulse. Following Sherwood's research that places the gnomes in the volitional process between judgment and choice, we can finally define the gnomes as *disthe position of the will* and psychologically frame it in the plane of attitudes generated by projections modified by the "being of pleasure" that will materialize under the passion of self-love in disadaptive cognitive schemes that will desynchronize the gnomonic will from the natural will and will corrupt the principle of difference in the princes the piof separation on all levels of existence. The above, give us the opportunity to address at the end of this introductory chapter some meanings related to tropos as a way of existence, as a behavioral pattern.

The mind and the will are together on the highest axiological level in the maximian theological system, in a synthetic union in which the gnomes have a defining contribution in that it perverts the mind through projections and schemes of thought generated by passions and imposes its disposition on the gnomonic will that is desynchronized by the will according to nature. The whole process presented fits in a proper way to what psychology calls the cognitive system. The consequences of gnomes in the plane of existence as a tropos fold just as appropriately on what psychology calls behavior. Therefore, it appears naturally our approach to demonstrate the influence of gnomes materialized as a tropose both from the perspective of cognitive-behavioral psychology and from that of the spirituality of Saint Maximus. However, in order to be able to realize the method of mirroring, of parallelism, we will start this approach from the perspective of fundamental psychology in general and cognitive-

behavioral psychology in particular, since the descriptive method used by them is a more elaborate one.

In the second chapter we deal with gnomes and tropesses from the perspective of cognitive-behavioral psychology. First we try to realize an anthropological model from the perspective of fundamental psychology and for this, at the beginning of the research, we present some introductory aspects related to the stages of development of the cognitive-behavioral branch among the other directions and branches that modern psychology knows. Next we refer to what cognitive-behavioral psychology understands when it defines a cognitive system and after we define and customize it according to the basic rule of cognitive sciences (modeling-formalization-simulation) we try to integrate gnomes as an attitudinal predisposition among the predefined variable values that generate a cognitive model. In order for the attempt to integrate gnomes among psychic mechanisms to be a relevant one, we first deal with how cognitive-behavioral psychology defines the psyche. However, the definition of the psyche as a substantial bio-chemical, energetic and informational system in synergy with the environment and with itself, is not necessarily received uniformly by all branches of current psychology, therefore, observing the method of mirroring, we present further how it defines orthodox Christian theology on the psyche and from this approach it is already anticipated the manifestation through the mind at its psycheal levels of the two ontological planes (the fictional one and the existential one) specific to the Maximian system, plans to which psychology cannot relate, being manifested only in the existential plane. We cannot talk about the psyche without debating the problem of the states in which it manifests itself: conscious, subconscious, unconscious and when in the mirror we talk about these states from the perspective of Saint Maximus' spirituality, we will talk about the heart as the center of the being in which, as on a vertical axis, not only the conscious and the subconscious are manifested, but, through the mind cleansed from the unseenness of the Truth, the superconscious is also manifested.

Since the psyche and his states have been addressed in the research noastra one can move on: the study of psychic mechanisms. First we present their definition and then their classical division according to the method of fundamental psychology and we will deal with each

mechanism individually and try to observe the place of the gnomes, its influence in these mechanisms. We have used in our research the classic Romanian textbooks of fundamental psychology to which we have added the specific references related to these mechanisms that the cognitive-behavioral branch generates. As a result, we tried to sense the presence and influence of gnomes within these psychic mechanisms as well as the application of this influence at the behavioral level in the tropos. The research was carried out from the perspective of the primary and secondary informational-operational psychic mechanisms, of the energizing-stimulating psychic mechanisms, of the regulating psychic mechanisms, of the integrating psychic mechanisms and then from the perspective of the self-image, of the self-consciousness and of the self. The conclusion related to this chapter attempts a lame integral of the gnomes as the disposition of the will and the way in which they act on the human psyche and behavior, an approach undertaken from the perspective of the theologian.

In the third chapter we deal with gnomes and troposses from the perspective of the anthropology of Saint Maximus. First we establish a general anthropological framework valid in Orthodox Christian anthropology, then we customize it specifically to the Maximian theological system. As there are three distinct existential stages in the history of salvation, each with a special anthropological specificity, the Adamic state, the post-fall state and the state of restoration in Christ, we have tried to follow the manifestation of gnomes and troposses from the anthropological perspective of each stage mentioned. The first subchapter deals with the anthropological model in the paradisiacal state according to the specifics of the theology of Saint Maximus. The next subchapter studies the anthropological model in the state of the fall and begins with the presentation of the event of the fall and the consequences of the fall from the perspective of Saint Maximus theology. Once the general framework is explained, there follows a mirror exposure with the presentation of psychic mechanisms from the perspective of cognitive-behavioral psychology of psychic mechanisms from the perspective of the theology of Saint Maximus. We deal with the informational-operational psychic mechanisms, the stimulating-energizing ones, the regulating ones, the integrative ones, the self-image, consciousness and I, following the

effect of gnomes in the manifestation of the tropox in the theological work of Saint Maximus. The next subchapter defines the anthropological model in the next stage in the history of salvation, in the stage of restoring human nature in Christ. First we define Christ as the ideal anthropological model. In order to achieve this, both the static side of the definition and the dynamic one must be followed. Thus, from the static perspective of the definition, the Incarnation and the consequences of this incarnation in the nature of human existence place Christ as the ideal anthropological model, and from the dynamic perspective it also defined the continuation of the ideal model through the Church as the permanent incarnation of Christ in history through the work of the Holy Spirit, an incarnation permanently embodied by the Church in its saints. All those listed are tracked according to the maximian theological system in his work. The next subchapter deals with the process of dehumanizing psychic mechanisms, which is possible in the human nature restored by Christ, in the Church through the Holy Mysteries. We are occupied by the practical life, the contemplative life and the mystical one according to the teaching of Saint Maximus. At the end of this subchapter we try to see the convergences and divergences resulting from the mirroring of the two fields of research in relation to the effects of gnomes and tropoes on human psychic mechanisms.

In order for the research approached in the previous chapters not to be limited only to the theoretical part, we try in the fourth chapter a practical application on a mental suffering caused by the effect of gnomes in psychic life. We chose to present a psychotherapy from the perspective of cognitive-behavioral psychology first and then of the spiritual one.

We conclude the approach of our research through the necessary conclusions:

"But will it be possible that madness, the most solitary of suffering and the most social of diseases, will ultimately be reduced only and only to biology? This is something we must doubt deeply. It is unlikely that the social and cultural dimensions of mental disorders, an indispensable part of the story of madness in the civilizations of the world over the

centuries, will gradually disappear or turn out to be mere epiphenomenal characteristics of a universal feature of human existence. Madness really has its meanings, no matter how ambiguous and ephemeral our attempts to capture them were. It remains a fundamental conundrum, a reproach against reason, an ineluctable integral part of civilization."¹

This is how Andrew Scull concludes his remarkable work, *A Cultural History of Madness. From the Bible to Freud, from the house of fools to modern medicine*. Her reading should be a mandatory preamble for all those who wish to form the broadest possible picture of what "the most solitary of suffering and the most social of the diseases" has meant throughout the history of mankind. Compared to the sufferings of the mentally ill of all times and cultures, any program sets in. It's a very sad reality... The Church could not stand apart from this deep human suffering, just as Christ was not indifferent to all suffering. It is recognized today that "the first hospitals for the sick and infirm, as charitable institutions, had been established in the Byzantine Empire (if we overlook the military hospitals that the Western Roman Empire occasionally created), but the idea was quickly adopted by Christians in other areas of the Near East, long before the advent of Islam". Christians have always seen in their fellows suffering from mental illness the image of God and have dealt with them as such, with all love, treating them like Christ who says, "Verily I say unto you, for ye have made one of these my brethren, too small, ye have made me" (Mt. 25:40). For some time, the treatment of mental problems remains, at least in Christian countries, under the prerogative of the Church. With time, medicine appears as a field in its own right, psychiatry emerges from medicine, then psychology with its subcategories and branches. It somehow respects all the steps necessary for a new science as T. Kuhn describes them. Naturally, with the passage of time we also reach the stage of crisis when the paradigm needs to be rethought. Thus, when referring to the causes of mental illness, Larchet correctly remarked:²

¹ Andrew SCULL, *A cultural history of madness. From the Bible to Freud, from the house of fools to modern medicine*, PLURAL M Collection, translation Anacaona PRIDE-SONETTO, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2017, p. 381.

² A. SCULL, *A history...*, p. 56.

"The very classic *Psychiatric Manual* of H. Ey. P. Bernard and C. Brisset now note the coexistence of four main types of theories: 1) organo-mechanistic theories, which consider mental illnesses to be of organic origin; 2) psycho-dynamic theories of the pathogenic unconscious, which considers them to be an effect of the forces of the unconscious (Freud and his disciples, Jung); 3) socio-psychogenic theories of environmental factors that portray mental illness as pathological reactions of a purely psychological nature to unfortunate or difficult situations (anglo-Saxon school, Pavlov), or to communication failures, especially within the family (Bateson, Watzlawick and the school of Palo Alto); 4) dynamist organogenic theories, which consider that mental illnesses are generated by a dismantling of the psychic being, this disorganization being conditioned by organic factors (Jackson, Janet, Ey). These different positions are, in principle, mutually exclusive: the former defends a purely organic ideology and therefore rejects any psychogenic or sociogenic factor; the second, giving precedence to psychogenic factors, denies mental illness any organic foundation and, although it admits the importance of certain relational factors, considers them to be endogenous; the third, rejecting any organic etiology and any intervention of a mental unconscious, exclusively attributes mental illness to exogenous factors; the fourth excludes such factors, such as recourse to the unconscious, and, although it admits an organic substrate of mental illness, it does not accept that their symptoms depend directly and mechanically on it, but recognises an essential role for the dynamics of mental forces in the structure and evolution of those diseases'.³

Overcoming the crisis situation, in the new paradigm in which psychiatry and psychology are located, one proceeds towards a unification in diagnosis and evaluation, although the methods of therapy remain very diverse. Apart from the demonic etiology, which modern psychiatry and psychology do not take into account, the other

³ JEAN-CLAUDE LARCHET, *Therapeutics of mental illness. The experience of the Christian East in the first centuries*, translated by Florin CHICORY Publishing Charisma, Bucharest, 1997, p. 19.

etiologies that the Church has been affirming for 2000 years, somatic and spiritual, are also confirmed by them. Even more, the appearance in psychology of so many subcategories, branches and specialties only opens wide the horizon of the embrace of the human mind to the complexity of human nature in the multitude of its manifestations, in an attempt to understand its mystery so beautifully expressed by the entire spiritual tradition of the Church:

"Among the things of the incomprehensible creation I see myself—the man. Who am I? Where am I from? What's the cause of my stay on earth? What is the purpose of my earthly life, of this short, grueling and exhausting journey in relation to yourself, compared to eternity... I appear in this unconscious world, without having any contribution to it, and then I leave it against my will, in an uncertain and unforeseen way. I don't know what's going to happen to me in a day or in a minute. I always come across something unexpected. I am always under the influence of circumstances and situations to which I am conditioned. A life spent in vain makes you prey to such thoughts. But they cannot be hidden from the Creator. The way I go through earthly life is frightening, and it's called death. The notion of death is related to that of the interruption of existence; but within me there is unwittingly the conviction that I am immortal. I feel immortal and all my actions come in line with this feeling. Those who die act at that moment as passers-by, as some who are displaced and not as some who are doomed to total extinction. Man is a mystery to himself. Will this mystery be sealed, and there is no means to be discovered? Yes! He sealed it for man sin and the fall. Man lacks true discernment and knowledge. As long as I am in my own fall, so too will the mystery – man – remain for me unexplained, for my broken reason, sick and blinded by lying has no capacity to discover it. The mystery – man – is opened to the extent accessible and beneficial to us by God who has taken the

image of man, by our Lord Jesus Christ, 'In whom are all the treasures of wisdom and hidden knowledge.'"⁴

The current cognitive-behavioral branch of psychology is fashionable. Why? Because it has significant results in improving the human condition that cannot be disputed. Because it has a cybernetic method by the third *modeling-formalization-simulation*, because it's focused on levels that also take into account the unconscious and the superconscious with their cognitive-impenetrable processes, because it takes into account the symbol as a bridge between levels of reality, because it can decrypt cognitive schemes, it can modify them and through these changes it also changes human behavior, etc. But, I would say, perhaps because it comes closest to what the Church has done and has been doing for 2000 years through spirituality. Metanoia means the change of mind, the return to what is after being. The result of metanoia is a behavioral one, namely liturgical integration and framing. And these are the premises of deification. From good existence to eternally good existence that I have all referred to. We're not surprised that psychologists read theology. We are not surprised that from the current position they realize the richness of Christian spirituality. But we're also not surprised that theologians read psychology. For spirituality must also be centered on each disciple individually. We are not surprised that a psychology of religion or pastoral psychology appears:

"The existential crisis, which characterizes the contemporary man and which, in the XX and XXI centuries, is expressed so clearly in philosophy, in literature and in the fine arts, leads man to the development of complex defense mechanisms, through which his inner harmony is disturbed, and sometimes also his psycho-somatic homeostasis, his social behavior being also deeply affected. The feeling of insecurity of which he is mastered amplifies his existential uncertainty and intensifies his fixation in sadness, in anxiety, in the feeling of hopelessness and thwarting of his expectations. (...) The knowledge gained from the field of psychology and psychiatry can be of help to the priest whenever he is

⁴ Saint IGNATIUS BRIANCIANINOV, *Word about man*, Publishing Abbot, 2007, pp. 15-16.

confronted with a congenital disorder of the psychic substrate of man, the approach and understanding of psychic phenomena can be facilitated in such cases by approaching them from the perspective of psycho-pathology."⁵

Why Saint Maximus? Because the world is increasingly discovering that its theology, its system, helps to mediate between opposites. Man's original purpose was to be a mediator. Saint Maximus says it very pressed and clear. Man was to mediate, according to his synthetic nature, between God and creation, between intelligible and sensitive, between the seen and the unseen world, between heaven and the world, between man and woman, between mind and work, between reason and feeling, etc. Initially, the man fails in his mission. But Christ fulfills this mediation perfectly. In Him all come together unmixed. And the Holy Spirit continues this work in the Church of Christ in His saints from all modal conditions. Saint Maximus is no exception to this work. And he mediates: between East and West, between being and existence, between logos and tropos, between theology and science, between spirituality and psychology. Suddenly, a distorted psychic projection that causes a disaptive cognitive scheme becomes synonymous with gnomes and wrong choices determined by a dark mind and the consequence is the same: man disadapts himself from God, from his fellowmen, from himself. Everything generates an uncomformed trouser. It requires healing, spiritual therapy and, why not, psychic therapy. When it comes to love, Saint Maximus teaches us that only the mediation of opposites gives rise to winning solutions. That's why he calls us to love, to get out of individualism:

"According to Saint Maximus, there is in the fallen man a fundamental passion, the mother of all other passions, which is filautia or selfish self-love. Through it, the willing disposition (γνώμη) of each is found in disagreement with that of the others (each asserting himself in his own individuality, at the expense of the others), thus fragmenting human nature into various "antagonistic parts". In the face of this situation of the struggle of the human nature against itself, Saint Maximus calls to love, through which the

⁵ Stavros I. BALOYANNIS, *Pastoral Psychology*, translated by Emanuel Dumitru, Doxologia Publishing House, Iași, 2015, p. 5-6.

harmony of the dispositions of the will of all is realized and through which the unification of the human nature is achieved, bringing it to the original unity of its logos. Through love, people, ceasing to consider what is their own and what separates them, see only what they have in common and unites them. Instead of this wrong inequality, according to which each claims to dominate the other, absolute equality arises. «Perfect love, writes Saint Maximus, does not admit, among all people who all have the same nature, no distinction based on the difference in character. She never sees but this one nature, she equally loves all men.' «He who [...] he holds the perfect love, he writes, he no longer makes a difference between himself and the other. [...] He sees in men only their unique nature: he sees them all on the plane of equality, for all he beats the same heart.» Through love, man comes to no longer regard any man as someone other than himself, seeing him as a member of his own nature, according to the likeness of the incarnate Word, which engulfed all men in the human nature that he assumed, in order to save them all, allowing them to be all united among themselves and with Himself."⁶

The notion of gnomes refers to the notion of cognition, the notion of tropos refers to the behavioral complex, metanoia as a change in the cognitive scheme refers to cognitive-behavioral therapy – and all those listed to try a common language, for the sake of man, in view of his good existence towards eternally good existence.

⁶ Jean-Claude LARCHET, *The actuality of the theology of Saint Maximus the Confessor*, traducere Paula and Marian Grosu, Conference by Mr. Jean-Claude Larchet, on October 15, 2010, in the "Mihai Eminescu" Hall of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, during the launch of the translation into Romanian language of his work *Saint Maximus The Confessor, mediator between East and Sunset*, published by the "Doxologia" Publishing House of the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Bucovina, 2010-*The Homage Year of the Creed Orthodox*, p. 17.

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