Chapter I
The Discovery of Russian Orthodoxy: the West as a Problem

1. From Orthodox Pietism to the Discovery of Personalism and of Russian Orthodoxy

Christos Yannaras was born in Athens in 1935. At the age of eighteen, on completing his secondary education, he entered the Orthodox theological brotherhood *Zōē* (Life) which at that time was extremely influential in Greek society and numbered among its most prestigious members Panayiotis Trembelas, a prolific professor of Orthodox dogmatics in the Faculty of Theology of the University of Athens.

Yannaras remained a member of this brotherhood for almost ten years, becoming one of its most dynamic younger members.[1] He left it only after a long inner struggle, in 1964, and dedicated himself for some years to philosophical and theological studies in his own country and abroad (Bonn and Paris). It was thus that he was able to pursue a doctorate in the Arts Faculty of the Sorbonne (1970).

1. He was the guiding spirit of a journal addressed to young readers, *Skapanē* (Mattock), which was published from January 1961 to December 1963. On leaving *Skapanē*, he continued with a similar kind of journal, founding *Synoro* (Frontier), which came out from 1964 to 1967. The last issue (no. 41) although ready for publication, did not come out as a result of the colonels' *coup d'état* on 21 April 1967. See S. Zouboulakis, 'To "Synoro" kai ho Chrēstos Giannaras: Hē theologikē protasē tēs apoēthikopoiēsēs tou Christianismou' (*Synoro* and Christos Yannaras: The theological proposition of the de-ethicisation of Christianity), in *Anataraxeis stē metapolemikē theologia: Hē 'Theologia tou '60'*, pp. 315-26, here at p. 316.

He has spoken of this difficult phase in his life in an autobiographical work,[2] perhaps the best known of his books, entitled *Refuge of Ideas*. In this book he reveals the slow but decisive passage in his inner life from a moralistic Orthodoxy, devout and sentimental – 'pietistic' as he would later call it – and at the same time rationalistic and intellectually blinkered, to an Orthodoxy linked with freedom and grounded on the person and on the realisation of the truth of the person in Christ. This was the discovery of personalism as a fundamental structure of Orthodox anthropology, a discovery prompted by a Socratic figure, Dimitrios Koutroubis (1921-83).[3]

According to his own testimony this discovery of personalism began with the study of three authors:[4] Nicolas Berdyaev, little of whose work had been translated in the 1950s; the Swiss Christian psychiatrist, Paul Tournier (*Le personnage et la personne,* translated into Greek under the title *To prosōpeion kai hē prosōpikotēs*[5] [Mask and Personality]); and Igor Caruso's work, *Psychanalyse und Synthese der Existenz* (translated into Greek under the title *Psychanalysis kai synthesis tēs hyparxeōs*). The last two works came out in *Zōē*'s famous psychology series directed by the Greek psychiatrist, Aristotle A. Aspiotis (1910-83).[6] In his autobiographical work Yannaras claims that he was particularly struck by Paul Tournier:

> I absorbed Tournier's book by reading it over and over again. From his lines emerged something that seemed to me primarily true and substantial: the absolute priority of the human person

2. Christos Yannaras, *Kataphygion ideōn: Martyria* (Refuge of Ideas: Testimony) (Athens: Domos, 1987).
3. On the mythicisation of the role of Koutroubis, Zouboulakis makes some pertinent observations. See his '*To "Synoro" kai ho Chrēstos Giannaras*', pp. 316-17 and also p. 355 (response to objections).
4. None of the three authors is Greek. In the 1950s and early 1960s personalism actually played a very marginal role in the Greek world. Cf. Basilio Petrà, 'Personalist Thought in Greece in the Twentieth Century: A First Tentative Synthesis', *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 50, nos 1-4 (2005), pp. 2-48.
5. Yannaras, *Kataphygion ideōn*, pp. 257-58.
6. Aspiotis was for many years editor of the periodical *Aktines* (Rays), the organ of the Christian Union of Scientists, and was one of the major diffusers of the awareness of psychology as a liberal art in Greece in the twentieth century. He was the founder at the beginning of the 1950s of the Institute of Medical Psychology and Mental Hygiene in Athens and launched numerous series and separate publications to make the recent findings of the anthropological sciences known in Greece. Wishing to encourage an outgrowing of the prevailing mechanistic view of Man, he introduced the Greeks to texts of authors such as V. Frankl, H. Baruk, K. Schneider, L. Binswanger, P. Lersch, G. Allport, I. Caruso etc. In particular, he encouraged the development of the medicine of the person, under the guidance and with the collaboration of Paul Tournier.

> not in an axiological or ideological sense, but a priority of life in relation to any schematisation of life – laws, values, moral codes – to any schematic mask which like the shirt of Nessus makes our real personhood disappear.[7]

The little he had read of Berdyaev was particularly revelatory. Through Berdyaev, Yannaras entered into a new world, into a new sense of the Christian faith. The page he devotes to describing Berdyaev's impact on his sense of Orthodoxy is illuminating:

> In the last years before I broke away, some readings had begun to open my eyes dimly to a different vision of life, to a sense of reality alien to that which had been imposed by my ideological militancy. Basically, I discovered Berdyaev. Few of his books had been translated into Greek at that time.[8] Yet they were enough to have had a revelatory effect on me. Here was a Christian author, and indeed an Orthodox one, who in his writings had not the slightest trace of the religiosity which I had known and which I was trying to live as the only authentic Christian life. He subjected moralism to a devastating critique, laid bare the narcissistic character of an individualistic religiosity, derided the turning of faith into a legalistic and ideological structure, had the audacity to respect the tragic adventure of atheism, and defended freedom as the absolute presupposition of a relationship with God.
>
> I was initiated by Berdyaev into my first sense of the difference between Eastern and Western Christianity. At university I had been taught the differences in dogma or the differences in administration and liturgical practice, but I had never suspected what realities of life were represented by these differences.
>
> I discovered with surprise that the elements of corruption and change in Christianity which Berdyaev noted in the Western tradition and stigmatised implacably were the same as those which I saw to be also dominant within the *Zōē* movement and to be tormenting our life: an egocentric self-sufficiency which was nourished by the turning of 'virtues' and of 'moral consistency' into idols. The substitution of experience by ideological 'certainty' – the priority of apologetics, or rational

7. Yannaras, *Kataphygion ideōn*, p. 258.
8. In fact, only one book had been translated by 1950, *The Destiny of Man*, under the title *Peri tou proorismou tou anthrōpou*. In 1952 Metropolitan Irenaeus of Samos translated *Spirit and Freedom*.

> 'proofs', the given 'authorities' for the reinforcement of truth. The schizophrenic dualism of body and soul, matter and spirit. The devaluation and depreciation of the sensible, the fear of love.[9]

So, it was through Berdyaev that Yannaras discovered a destiny common to a certain kind of Orthodoxy and the West, and at the same time gained a perception of what true Orthodoxy was. Even with all his peculiarity, Berdyaev put him into contact with certain themes of Russian diaspora theology which in the same period came to be set out by Koutroubis.

Passing through the hands of such masters, he then discovered the theology of Vladimir Lossky.[10] He rapidly absorbed his fundamental theses, in particular, his interpretation of the difference between the Eastern tradition and the Latin tradition. As early as June 1964 the *Kathēmerinē* newspaper published his article entitled '*Limos eperchomenos kai hē adraneia tōn syneidēsēon*' (The coming famine and the inertia of consciences),[11] in which Lossky's theses, assimilated via Olivier Clément, are well presented:

> By the light of this dogma [The Holy Trinity] Orthodoxy defines and describes the nature of Man. Man, created 'in the image' of the consubstantial (*homoousios*) and tripersonal God, is also himself *homoousios* by nature and *myriypostatos* in accordance with the persons (*prosōpa*). Every human being is a unique and unrepeatable *prosōpo*, but all these unique and unrepeatable persons are '*homoousia*' – of one and the same *ousia*. So only Man actualises his own hypostasis as *prosōpo*, when he finds himself in a communion of love with all the other persons.[12]

Later in 1966, in discussion with a Greek intellectual, Angelos Terzakis, in the journal *Epoches*, he explicitly takes up the Losskyan idea that the *prosōpo* is 'rationally indefinable and remains always unique, incomparable and "dissimilar"'.[13]

9. Yannaras, *Kataphygion ideōn*, pp. 256-57.
10. His celebrated *Essai sur la théologie de l'Église d'Orient* (1944) was published in Greek in Thessaloniki in 1964. Yannaras, however, already had some knowledge of Lossky's thinking.
11. The article was later reprinted in Christos Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia: Neoellēnika theologika dokimia* (Honest with Orthodoxy: Modern Greek theological essays) (Athens: Astēr, 1968), pp. 17-22.
12. Christos Yannaras, '*Limos eperchomenos kai hē adraneia tōn syneidēseōn*', in idem, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, p. 21.
13. Christos Yannaras, '*Gia to problēma tou kakou*' (The problem of evil), in

This idea of Lossky's (in some form already present in Berdyaev) is based on the difference in Man between nature and person: the person indeed is for him irreducible to nature and nature is that which the person has in common with other human beings. Yannaras welcomes here such a thought and articulates some of his earliest moral reflections. Thus he defines evil as 'that which damages the human *prosōpo*, that which lays a snare for the *ousia* of his universal hypostasis, that which takes away the uniqueness and the "dissimilarity" of the *prosōpo*, the possibility of self determination, or, in other words, freedom of the *prosōpo* in the face of a uniform "nature"'.[14]

This discovery of personalism, as is apparent, is at the same time the discovery of a different Orthodoxy, an Orthodoxy which is also different from the West.

The idea quickly takes shape in this phase of Yannaras' thinking and becomes well established that Orthodoxy and the personal conception of Man go together precisely because – in Lossky's perspective – Orthodoxy generates the theological notion of the person and conversely the notion of the person finds in its theological source its clarification and the way in which it can be fully realised.

We are still dealing here with an early discovery, a youthful and enthusiastic discovery pervaded by an emotion intensified by the anguish of leaving *Zōē*. What is still lacking is analysis, an intellectual elaboration, and the exposition of the fecundity of this vision. Nevertheless, the fundamental horizon has been defined.

In this context the young Yannaras pays great attention to Russian literature and drinks deeply of Dostoevsky. It is from the great Russian writer that he arrives at a first unitary interpretation of the West and in relation to him a specific understanding of the mission of Orthodoxy.

2. Dostoevsky's Criticism of the West and the Mission of Orthodoxy

In 1964 when Yannaras departed for his studies in Europe and left *Zōē*, he was already bringing to maturity some of his ideas on the West and Orthodoxy's relationship to it. Through Dimitris Koutroubis (and Berdyaev) he had already come to know the theology of the diaspora. He had also developed contacts with Greek intellectuals such as Dimitris Pikionis and Zisimos Lorentzatos, the first of whom told him clearly that

Epoches, no. 34 (February 1966), pp. 115-19. The article was later reprinted in Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 133-46, here at p. 135.

14. Ibid.

he had to leave *Zōē*.[15] These were ideas forged largely through the literary work of Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-81).[16] The young Yannaras drew much from the great Russian writer in his rebellion against a Christianity that had been reduced to a matter of ethics. One of the Karamazov brothers, Alyosha, provided an ideal example for this,[17] and for that reason he dedicated his earliest text to him in the collection published as *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia* under the title, '*Peri* ēthikōn *protypōn (me anaphora ston Aliosa Karamazof)*' (Moral models [with reference to Alyosha Karamazov]).[18]

He also drew from him a precise interpretation of Western Christianity – the Christianity of Europe – and the conviction of the indispensability of Orthodoxy if Europe is going to find itself. He spoke

15. Yannaras, *Kataphygion ideōn*, pp. 275 ff., 300. It was to Lorentzatos that Yannaras dedicated *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, his first collection of essays.
16. Yannaras wrote later on the role of Dostoevsky in his life: 'Dostoevsky has cut deeply into my life; he has been for me like the old man in the dream that Papadiamantis records' (Christos Yannaras, *Hē kokkinē plateia kai ho theios Arthouros* [Red Square and Uncle Arthur] [Athens: Domos, 1986], p. 35). This work is a kind of diary of his visit to Russia in May 1982 to take part in a Congress of Religions for Peace and against Nuclear Arms. He tried without success to be taken to Dostoevsky's grave.
17. Yannaras also attributes his theological vocation to the attraction of Alyosha's existential question: 'I know that I began to study theology – at the age of eighteen and while I was preparing for the Polytechnic up to the last moment – captivated by Alyosha Karamazov and by his choice without compromises: all or nothing. My family and teachers literally wept at my absurd choice. In those years to study theology was a public disgrace – in my case I concealed it from my relations' (Yannaras, *Hē kokkinē plateia*, p. 135).
18. Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 92-97. This text was published in the November 1963 issue of the periodical already mentioned, *Skapanē*. On p. 96 he says, among other things, 'The essential content of faith, salvation by means of grace, the grafting of our corrupt nature into the new humanity of the New Adam, are realities that our contemporary social Christianity does not know and finds incomprehensible. We have pursued the social mission of Christianity with a culpable unilateralism, basing ourselves on the moral representation of the "integral [*artios*] human being", cultivating an overgrown superego and remaining blind to the true image of our fall and our corruption and to the necessity of God's grace.' Note that the idea of the *artios* human being relies on the words of 2 Timothy 3:17 and therefore has a biblical origin. Yannaras, nevertheless, severely criticises its purely ethical interpretation. Cf. a text of July 1964: '*Ho erchomenos: Schediasma mias charismatikēs parousias*' (He who comes: Outline of a charismatic advent), which was subsequently published in Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 50-56, especially pp. 53-54. It should be mentioned that the ethical interpretation of *artios anthrōpos* was the ideal of one of the major figures of *Zōē*, namely A.A. Aspiotis (1910-83), on whom see p. 2, note 6 above.

of this in some length in a lecture which he gave in December 1965 and then published in instalments in the daily newspaper *Kathēmerinē* in February 1966:[19]

> For Dostoevsky Europe is not Christian. Catholicism has betrayed Christianity and transformed it into a worldly social programme. It has succumbed to Christ's third temptation, to a temptation of worldly power. The story of the Grand Inquisitor is the most radical criticism there is of Catholicism – the revelation of the religious dominion of the Antichrist – and this challenge has been left without a response by the Westerners. But for Dostoevsky even Protestantism has denied Christianity, has transformed it into a simple ethical system. Christ is only an ethical model to be imitated and therefore it is not important whether he is a mere man or both God and man. In Protestantism there is also room for the denial of the incarnation of the Word. Thus, for Dostoevsky nothing remains but Russia. Russia has Orthodoxy; it has the criteria for knowing the truth. Therefore, only in Russia can judgement exist. Europe does not have the possibility of acquiring a consciousness of judgement. It lacks the criteria because it relies upon an illusory Christianity; it believes it is Christian without being so.[20]

From Dostoevsky the young Yannaras also derived his perception of the responsibility towards the West. This is clearly apparent in some lucid pages that he published in *Kathēmerinē* on 18 March 1964 scarcely a month after leaving the *Zōē* theological brotherhood after ten years of militant activity (26 February).[21] The title of these articles is *Rōsikē kai hellēnikē orthodoxia* (Russian and Greek Orthodoxy).[22] Inspired by the *Speech on Pushkin* that Dostoevsky delivered on 8 June 1880,[23] and

19. Subsequently published in Yannaras *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 155-77, under the title, '*Hē synantēsē Camus kai Ntostogiephski stous "Daimonismenous"*' (The meeting of Camus and Dostoevsky in *The Devils*).
20. Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 155-56.
21. Cf. the bitter description of this moment in Yannaras, *Kataphygion ideōn*, pp. 342-43.
22. I read the text thus as reported by Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 32-41. The text has been lightly revised with respect to its original publication in the newspaper.
23. On 2 May 1982 Yannaras had the opportunity to stop in front of the Pushkin monument in the square named after him in Moscow and recall the discourse pronounced by Dosteovsky: 'I stopped in front of it for a while, with emotion' (Yannaras, *Hē kokkinē plateia*, pp. 80-81).

particularly by some prophetic words contained in it – 'And later, I am fully confident, we, that is not me personally but those who will come after me, the Russians of the future, will all understand from the first till the last that to become a true Russian means precisely to aspire to the definitive reconciliation of the European contradictions'[24] – Yannaras speaks of the mission of Orthodoxy to save 'old Europe',[25] to give it new life. In saying this Yannaras seems to be in complete agreement with the vision of Georges Florovsky and the way he presents the first Slavophiles:

> The first Slavophiles had derived the idea of Russia's mission from European needs, from questions not yet resolved or unresolvable in the other half of the Christian world. It is to this feeling of Christian responsibility that the great justice and moral force of the early Slavophiles respond.[26]

Russian Orthodoxy, for Yannaras, has already in some way realised Dostoevsky's prophecy:

> A series of philosophers and theologians who one after another have played a central role in European life is the vital succession that the first group of Slavophiles has left as a legacy: Bulgakov, Florensky, Khomiakov, Berdyaev, and the contemporary Russian theology of the diaspora: Lossky, Florovsky, Evdokimov, Zander, Meyendorff, Schmemann are the spiritual presences immediately perceptible in European life. The second group make available to us today the responses of Orthodox theology to the contemporary Western man. With the first perception itself of the core of life that exists within the Russian Orthodox tradition, these men have in a marvellous way realised Dostoevsky's prophecy concerning the Russian national capacity for effecting a substantial reconciliation with the Western world.[27]

Yannaras insists – it should be noted – that nothing of the kind could have been realised if the Orthodox experience of ordinary people (the place of the conservation of the Orthodox truth) had not found flesh

24. Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, p. 34.
25. Ibid., p. 33.
26. Cited from the Italian translation of Florovsky's *Ways of Russian Theology*, *Le vie della teologia russa* (Genoa: Marietti, 1987), p. 407. The Italian translation is only slightly different from the Greek one used by Yannaras.
27. Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 33-34.

in the spiritual renewal of the Russian eighteenth century (St Seraphim of Sarov);[28] besides, the heirs of the first Slavophiles knew how to tone down the Slavophiles' exaggerations: the excessive emphasis on the popular element as if the people could take the place of the Fathers of the Church, 'the nationalism of Russian Orthodoxy, which has nourished the dreams and efforts of Panslavism'.[29]

An extraordinary symbol of this realisation of Dostoevsky's prophecy is for Yannaras the approach of Camus to *The Devils* and in general to the great Russian author in whom he recognises a prophetic character. Yannaras cites with emotion Camus' prologue to the French dramatised version of *The Devils*:

> For a long time Marx has been considered the prophet of the twentieth century. Today we know that what he prophesied is no longer what we expect. And we know very well that Dostoevsky was the true prophet. He prophesied the dominion of the Grand Inquisitor and the triumph of force over justice. . . . For me he is above all the writer who long before Nietzsche became aware of contemporary nihilism, who understood and foresaw its bestial and insane consequences and sought to establish the message of salvation.[30]

But there is something even more symbolic: Camus' intellectual journey brought him close to Orthodoxy. First of all, because he perceived the crisis of the West and wanted to go beyond Western illusions; secondly, because he was an atheist, which is to say he had rejected the gnoseological/rationalistic schemes of Western metaphysics (Aquinas, Descartes, the Enlightenment) in order to seek existential truth.[31] In Camus Yannaras saw an example of how a European, conscious of the death of God and touched by the experience of perdition, could be open to the Orthodox message

28. 'The roots of the Russian religious renaissance are hidden behind the line of intellectuals in the unknown *startsi* of the Church, in the mystical presences of living holiness, with the lived Orthodoxy of the authentically human and the authentically divine, which is the monasticism of the East. Clearly distinguishable among them is the most venerated St Seraphim of Sarov, who seems also to have been the prototype of Zosima in *Karamazov*' (Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 35-36).
29. Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, p. 36.
30. Ibid., p. 157.
31. Ibid., p. 156: 'In other words, truth is not a gnoseological problem but a matter of salvation. And this is a second reason why Camus is very close to Orthodoxy.'

of salvation, just as Dostoevsky had prophesied.[32] In this connection Yannaras recalls a fact – told to him by Olivier Clément – that had struck him deeply:

> Albert Camus a little before his death read Lossky's book, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. For Camus this theology was an unexpected surprise. 'This is something other,' he said, 'than what I am able to discuss.' And he began his dialogue with it by producing the dramatised version of Dostoevsky's *Devils*. But he did not do so in time to be able to continue.[33]

For Yannaras, however, the true sign – a sign inaugurating a new epoch – that marked an opportunity in the West lay in the events of May 1968, in the widespread protests that erupted in the West at the end of the 1960s. Yannaras was to state this formally in his introduction to the first Greek edition of *The Freedom of Morality*:

> It seems that the time is right for Eastern Orthodox tradition to speak out. We are privileged perhaps to live in an historical period of a first exit from the scheme of a conventional morality which was sanctioned within the cultural confines of Europe by the Western deformation of Christianity – the morality that is based on the legal concept of sin, on the notion of individual transgression or individual merit, on the forensic concept of the relation of humanity to God.[34]

And what about Greek Orthodoxy as it existed at that moment? For the young Yannaras Greek Orthodoxy was at a standstill; it was still in a situation similar to that which was experienced by Russian Orthodoxy at the beginning of the eighteenth century. That is to say, on the one hand, the institutional and cultural influence of the West, the forced Europeanisation that attempted and was still attempting to eradicate the Hellenism of the Orthodoxy actually experienced by the people,

32. Ibid., p. 172: 'Dostoevsky has shown, I think, with clarity that the response of Orthodoxy presupposes a crisis, a *perdition*. You must be "lost" in order to be "saved". . . . And Europe, in a continually growing measure, has the privilege of this perdition.'
33. Ibid.
34. Christos Yannaras, *Hē eleutheria tou* ēthous*: Dokimes gia mia orthodoxē theōrēsē tēs ethikēs* (The Freedom of morality: Essays towards an Orthodox vision of ethics) (Athens: Athēna, 1970), p. 10.

'of popular truth'[35] reduced to an archaeological exhibit; and, on the other hand, the popular radicalism of a few prophetic voices, the Greek Dostoevskies:

> Makriyannis, Solomos, Papadiamantis – it is clear that at least these have dug deep into the origins, not only into the lateral branches, but down into the roots. And these roots, which they have articulated prophetically like Dostoevsky, can nourish not only Greece but also the West which has grown old 'in the Sins' of rationalistic systems.[36]

At a standstill in this situation, Greek Orthodoxy continued to live in a deep sleep while 'a real earthquake' was taking place, that is, the West's rediscovery of the Greek Fathers, of Byzantium, of Orthodoxy and even of the *Philokalia*.[37] Western theologians were publishing Eastern texts and studying them enthusiastically. The Greeks were limiting themselves to deriving benefits from tourism and feeling a certain Orthodox pride – nothing more than that.

Why did the same happen in Greece in the twentieth century as had happened in Russia in the nineteenth? Because the same miracle was necessary to create the spiritual presupposition: behind the Russian intellectuals was Seraphim of Sarov. Because in Greece too 'a handful of men' were bold enough to grasp 'the silence of action' or to put down roots in the 'soil of the Orthodox East' and offer today, a prophetic testimony about God, to give flesh to the *Logos* 'in silence, humility, abnegation and asceticism'.[38]

However, where could such men be found and how could the temptation to identify Greek Orthodoxy simply with popular Greek culture or Green nationalism be avoided?

For Yannaras the prophetic capacity is historically represented by two figures: the monk and the martyr;[39] now, however – we are in 1964 – he must deal with martyrs capable of taking up the cross of technology[40] and with monks who are rediscovering the Orthodox sense of their

35. Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, p. 38.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., pp. 38-39.
38. Ibid., p. 40.
39. Ibid., p. 51: 'The monk and the martyr embody the alert awareness of prophecy. They intervene in historical time to set a standard of historical duty (*chreos*). Their presence does not belong only to the past.'
40. Ibid., p. 54.

own mission.[41] The capacity for prophecy is understood as the rejection of heretical Orthodoxy (the kind of Orthodoxy that in some way has accepted the two specific differences – the heresies – of the West: the rational foundation of faith and its reduction to moralistic pietism),[42] of an Orthodoxy that is *anerastos*, that is, without *eros*, incapable of exhibiting the erotic substance of Christian experience,[43] and of an iconoclast orthodoxy (iconoclasm always accompanies a conservative pietism).[44]

First of all, the prophetic capacity is understood as a Greek Orthodoxy that is capable of rediscovering its own ecumenical mission and can offer a vision of the universality of Orthodoxy,[45] avoiding reducing it to a form of nationalism, a problem peculiar to Greek Orthodoxy but also affecting Orthodoxy as a whole.[46]

Is a renewal of this kind possible? Writing the preface to *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia* (Honest with Orthodoxy) in Bonn in March 1967, Yannaras is pessimistic. He speaks of the end of Greek Orthodoxy, its end not as an institution but as a salvific presence:

41. Cf. the article '*Hairetikē Orthodoxia?*' (Heretical Orthodoxy?) which was published in 1966 and reprinted in Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 59-73. On pp. 63-64 Yannaras says: 'The criterion of Orthodoxy is actual experience and the *mens* of the people – first of all experience. And because experience is first of all, it is monasticism that always has the first word in the self-awareness of Orthodoxy. But strictly speaking, monasticism is that which is lacking in Orthodoxy in Greece. It is lacking as a prophetic presence and as an eschatological witness to the life of the Church. . . . Today monasticism in the Greek state only preserves the consciousness of the past. Its witness has no rapport with experiential, theological certainties. . . . Today monasticism engages in journalism, raises its voice, anathematises – certainly not to testify to the Taboric experience of nature transfigured but to condemn the "moral crisis" or the antichrist papists who dare to cut their hair and their beard.'
42. Cf. ibid.
43. Cf. the article '*Erōs kai agamia: To drama henos anerastou Christianismou*' (Eros and celibacy: The drama of a loveless Christianity), first published in the spring of 1965 in *Synoro* and reprinted in Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 74-83.
44. Cf. the article '*Eikonoklastes, hoi syntērētikoi tēs Orthodoxias*' (Iconoclasts, the conservatives of Orthodoxy), published in the winter of 1965 in *Synoro* and reprinted in Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 84-91.
45. Cf. the article '*Helladikē kai oikoumenikē Orthodoxia*' (Helladic and ecumenical Orthodoxy), published in *Kathēmerinē* on 6 October 1964 and reprinted in Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 42-49.
46. Cf. the article '*Hē apophasē De Oecumenismo tēs Deuterēs Batikanēs Synodou kai ho ethnikismos tēs Orthodoxias*' (The Decree *De Oecumenismo* of the Second Vatican Council and Orthodoxy's nationalism), published in the spring of 1966 in *Synoro* and reprinted in Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 98-109.

> a historical end does not necessarily always imply historical extinction; it can also mean historical aphasia. Orthodoxy in Greece does not show signs of a historical presence, but shows rather an absence, both in terms of theological self-consciousness – in dialogical relation with the present – and in terms of an updated worship, an ecclesial art and a contemporary monasticism and pastoral practice. The preservation of a museum-like tradition and an identification with the destinies of national life, even if objectively elements of survival, do not negate the fact of a historical end.[47]

Before concluding these reflections on what I have called the Dostoevskian phase of Yannaras' vision of the West, it seems useful to me to make two observations.

The first is this. The ecumenical aphasia of Greek Orthodoxy that Yannaras laments is already attributed to Western influence, even if for the time being this is seen principally as beginning with the Bavarian monarchy and is subsequently identified especially with the reduction of Christianity to pietism and moralism. This signifies that already at this time Greek Orthodoxy was aphasic because it was not truly Greek, because it was betraying its own Greek being. This same discourse on ecumenicity as the vocation of Greek Orthodoxy cannot help but appear ambiguous. If, on the one hand, it is true that a genuine Greek Orthodoxy is that which is open to ecumenicity (of which there are indications in Yannaras' texts of this period),[48] on the other hand, it can also be true that Greek Orthodoxy is truly ecumenical if it becomes more Greek, that is to say, more rooted in the Orthodox authenticity of the Greek Fathers, of Palamite hesychasm of popular Orthodox experience, of the Greek Dostoevskies. The first move leads to judging Hellenism in the light of ecumenicity and therefore to valuing the elements held in common with the West. The second, by contrast, leads to identifying ecumenicity with the *via aurea* of Orthodox Hellenism, in so far as it is Orthodox, that is, in so far as it is not Western: the real risk of this move is of transformation of anti-Westernism into a vital structural element of Yannaras' thought, as underlined by Pantelis Kalaitzidis, for whom the risk has become a reality. In fact, this second move seems not only to predominate but to be radicalised and to become much stronger as a result of what one might call the 'Heideggerian phase' in Yannaras' thought.

47. Ibid., p. 11.
48. Cf. the article '*Ho "laos tou Theou" ston Makrygiannē*' (The 'people of God' in Makriyannis), published in the fall of 1966 in *Synoro* and reprinted in Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 178-90.

Here I would make my second observation. In 1966 the signs begin to emerge clearly of a reading by Yannaras of Heidegger's *Holzwege*.[49] Yannaras intuits that Heidegger's interpretation of nihilism, in the footsteps of Nietzsche, offers new elements with respect to Dostoevsky: it does not deal only with the rejection of the institutional deformation of Christianity (the Grand Inquisitor) and with the representation of nihilism as a Western crisis, as an experience of perdition which gives an opening to 'Orthodox' salvation;[50] under the heading of nihilism there is something more, something more radical which touches the very way in which human beings set about confronting being. Towards the end of 1966 Yannaras' ontological research takes off; he says it himself in the preface to *To prosōpo kai ho erōs* (Person and Eros).[51]

49. Cf. the article '*Scholio Orthodoxou ston "thanato tou Theou"*' (Comment of an Orthodox on the 'death of God'), published in the spring of 1966 in *Synoro* and reprinted in Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 113-25. Yannaras cites Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Klostermann, 1963). He dwells on the interpretation that Heidegger gives of nihilism in the footsteps of Nietzsche, anticipating some of his theses that will follow. It is not by chance that, with regard to the original text in *Synoro*, Yannaras adds a reference to his work of 1967 on Heidegger and the Areopagite, which we shall consider shortly.
50. The category of perdition is that which guides the first uses that Yannaras makes of Jean-Paul Sartre's thought, as appears in Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 120-23, and in the reply given to A. Terzakis in *Epoches* of February 1966, '*Gia to problema tou kakou*' (The problem of evil), and reprinted in Yannaras, *Timioi me tēn Orthodoxia*, pp. 133-46.
51. I cite here from the publication of this work in *Deukalion* 3, no. 10 (1974), p. 145, where, in saying that its first version was his doctoral thesis in Thessaloniki, *To ontologikon periechomenon tēs theologikēs ennoias tou prosōpou* (The ontological content of the theological concept of the person) (Athens: Tip. Proodos, 1970), he adds: 'It was one of the stages or one of the phases of the attempt to study the themes that are brought together in the present work – in the midst of other pulses that have preceded and followed it, from the end of 1966, at about which time this attempt began, up to the present day.'