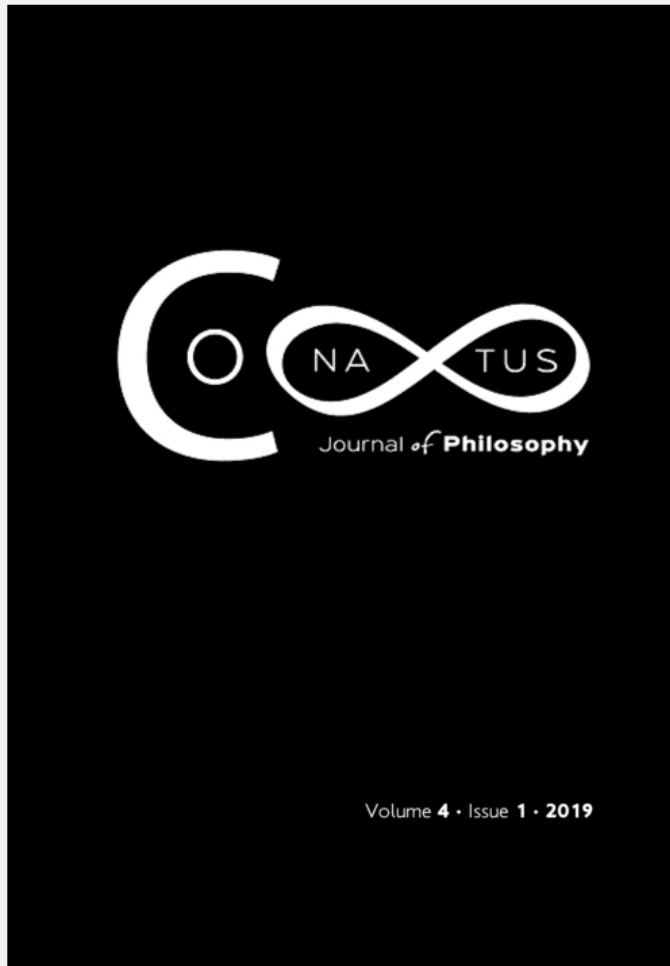


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# Ontology of Time as a Deconstruction of Space: An Essay on the Philosophy of Byzantine Music

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## Abstract

*In this paper the author examines the ontology of Byzantine music in its self, its aesthetical ground, the philosophical and cultural principles of creation, its episteme, the epistemological field that produced its forms from the 12<sup>th</sup> till the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and why that musical ontology hasn't change through the centuries. The paper discusses in particular Ernst Bloch's view that the only evolutionary expression of the Absolute spirit as far as music is concerned, is Western classical music. The author claims that the Western and the Byzantine music stand for two totally distinct and diverse ontologies of the musical being, something that Bloch seems to overlook; this, according to the author, is mostly due to the different systems of representation that have been used, and especially the representational ideas of the time-space relation. The author supports the view that while Western music is spatially-modeled, Byzantine music is time-modeled.*

**Key-words:** *philosophy of music; time and space representation in music; aesthetics as ontology; Byzantine music; Koukouzelis; papadika*

Discussing the centuries-long history of Western music and comparing it with – in his words – *Greek music*, the famous Marxist philosopher and aesthetician Ernst Bloch, a member of the Frankfurt School, in his *Essays on Philosophy of Music* makes a quite strong axiological and metaphysical judgment. In the first essay of his book with the title *The Philosophy of Music* one could definitely consider historicity as the foundation of Bloch's claims. According to him, only Western music can be thought of as having a history considering the development of its musical forms; on the contrary, Greek music has kept its original forms intact, with no substantial changes, and this unique feature makes Greek music a completely unhistorical manifestation of the Absolute spirit. Even in later times Church music, as a continuation of the ancient Greek musical forms, “remained within the confines of monophony.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ernst Bloch, *Essay on the Philosophy of Music*, trans. Peter Palmer (Cambridge: Cambridge

To anyone who is well versed in the Hegelian legacy that underlies any Marxist aesthetical approach, this statement by Bloch sounds quite reasonable, and is equally expectable. Some further clarification is still needed here, though. The kinds of music Bloch refers to are the ones we call *classical* or *cult* music. In the light of this, Bloch by the term ‘Greek music’ means exclusively Eastern Church music, while to him ‘Western music’ is Church music of the Latin West on the one hand, and on the other the individual art music that has been produced during the last five centuries, whose roots can be traced back to the Latin cultural and musical legacy.

Tagging along with Foucault and his concept of *episteme*, one could assume that the development of Western music is a consequence of the changes in the epistemological field that caused the emergence of a new cultural paradigm and new aesthetical ideals in music during the last century of the Middle Ages in the Latin West. Till the 11<sup>th</sup> century the principles of musical creation were quite similar with regard to both Western and Eastern Church. Historical developments, however, created a new musical episteme in the Latin West. In the face of this, the Eastern Byzantine church petrified its dominant principles of musical creation that were completely developed and established during the last seven centuries of the Eastern Roman Empire – or Byzantium, and its musical praxis would stay loyal to the same patterns of musical creation till present day; nor does the Eastern Church seem to be concerned about profound objections such as Bloch’s that adopt historicity as their point of view.

Bloch is very clear about the ontology of the historical relevance of Western music. What is it that brings the Western music into historical relevance? According to him, it is the “contemporaneous experiments in polyphony (and they occurred only in European music).”<sup>2</sup> Polyphony was invented by the Western Church and, as Bloch puts it, “[...] learned monks discovered all kinds of things.”<sup>3</sup> This way Greek and Byzantine musical creations remained monophonic, and this is the ontological reason why the Absolute spirit left their historical phenomenology as an overruled phase.

This paper is not intended to be a polemic against Bloch’s views. Nonetheless, the issue that concerns monophonic and polyphonic music is a kind of ‘musical *Schlagwort*’ to me, exactly as it is with successful jazz improvisations: it allows me to focus on the purely philosophical – and by no means musicological – aim of this paper, which consists in *understanding the ontology of Byzantine music in itself, its aesthetical background, the philosophical and cultural principles that have led to its creation, its episteme,*

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University Press, 1986), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 3.

*that is, the epistemological field that produced its forms between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and the reasons why this musical ontology didn't change through the centuries that followed.* I have good reasons to assume that Bloch wasn't very well versed into Byzantine music; as a matter of fact, I believe that he probably was completely unaware of its forms and rules, and there definitely have been practical reasons for this: until the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were no notational translations of Byzantine works available in the West, no concerts of Byzantine music performed, no experience of *liturgy*, no particular acquaintance with the works of the greatest Byzantine composers. Bloch makes no particular reference to any of the Greek Church fathers' views and works with regard to music (he finds their views too mystical, mere repetitions of the old theoretical musical books that were in use during the Byzantine era), nor he refers to any of the musical masterpieces of the Byzantine and post-Byzantine period. Nevertheless, some of his claims concerning the very foundations of Western music provide justification for the view that there actually are *two totally distinct ontologies of the musical being*, something that Bloch doesn't seem to be concerned about. The reason for the existence of these two *heterogenic musical ontologies* lies, in my view, in *the different systems of representation*, especially as far as *the representational ideas of time-space relation* are concerned. In my view the Western music is *spatially modeled*, while the Byzantine music is *time modeled*.

## I.

The Byzantine music has produced several forms throughout its history, but its genuine ontology could be fully apprehended through the most profound style of Byzantine chant, the *papadiki*. During the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries there were various Byzantine musical forms for all kinds of occasions, both religious and secular. Until the 10<sup>th</sup> century the key principle in Byzantine music was that each syllable comes in one distinct tone; this practice was based on the theoretical concept that the lyrical text should have supremacy over the music. But from the 10<sup>th</sup> century and on music begun to acquire supremacy over the text, hence one syllable could be extended in such a way, as to be uttered by means of more notes.<sup>4</sup> Until the 14<sup>th</sup> century this method had already become dominant in Byzantine compositions. The new style was called *kalofonikon*, that is, 'hearing that is appealing to the ear.' This new form didn't affect at all the ontology of Byzantine music, that was based on the ontology of time as duration; what it did was simply to reveal the nature of duration and its representation in a much more precise manner. The main aspiration of this style was to establish the supremacy of music over the lyrical text, with the purpose to create musical

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<sup>4</sup> See Jevgenij Hercman, *Vizantijska Nauka o Muzici* (Beograd: Clio, 2004), 185.

material that would affect the emotions without any reference to the text. This style was also called *papadiki art*, a term coined by composers and scholars in Constantinople; it originates from the adjective *papadical*, which comes from the noun *papas*, i.e. father. At the time this noun was not used only with regard to priests, but it also referred to other church servants, chanters included. The musical pieces that were produced according to the new style were introduced in the practice of the Church simply as *papadika*.

The most significant figure in the Byzantine music of the time, especially as far as this new method of composing was concerned, was *Ioannis Koukouzelis Papadopoulos*, who lived during the late 13<sup>th</sup> century; in this paper I will focus on the aesthetical foundations of his music in general. Koukouzelis' compositions are extremely extensive, a sign of particularly broad musical thinking that is typical for the *papadika* period: their duration ranges from twenty to forty minutes – some are even longer. They consist in lots of never ending melodic lines that exceed two octaves, complex transpositions and alliterations, vicious interplay of different modes in one piece and their basic tones, even a lot of tonal center gaps during several pieces; in a word, Koukouzelis' compositions make use of pre-existing, traditional musical patterns in a totally new way. This new style also features peculiar deconstructions of the text: single lyrical sentences were often extended in a forty minutes musical piece; to this purpose the words were exposed to *anagrammatismos*, a method that results in almost infinite repetitions of the same words and phrases, regrouping and replacing the poetic elements of the text, and surrealistically “chopping of the words with insertions between them and their syllables with other syllables without meaning like τε, ρε, κι, χι, υι, τι, χω, and χα.”<sup>5</sup> The pieces also include sub-pieces in various tempos that are called *kratimas* (in Greek: *τά κρατήματα*) that, according to Byzantine composers, expand the form of the piece and in some way hold and keep its *μέλος*. The aim of *kratimas* is to extend the time and to keep the *logos* of the mode alive almost in infinite duration, with very ecstatic melodic lines on words without any meaning, like *ne ne na, terirem, te ne no*. The idea was to produce the effect that *the chanters chant God, and God is chanting through the chanters*. Within this ecstatic ontology of time as duration one transcends any semantic meaning, and enters God's ineffableness. During the last six centuries composers such as Xsenos Koronis, Germanos of New Patras, Valasios the Priest, Petros Bereketis, and others, followed Koukouzelis in his style of composing continuities.

## II.

When it comes to Western religious music, there is no doubt that even from the 13<sup>th</sup> and in the 14<sup>th</sup> century it had already begun to use harmony and

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 186.

counterpoint on purpose of creating the notion of the third, the key element of harmony; it is irrelevant whether this happened due to the influence of secular music or not. In the Byzantine East, folk music stayed monophonic until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, probably due to the fact that the musical forms and ways used by the Ottomans were very close to those of the Byzantines. In Bloch's words:

The house of tonality has been built, and the actual truly 'musical' breadth, laws of perspective, transcendence of the sound-world, foreshadowed. The individual styles, melodic in the case of Italians, contrapuntal in the case of the Flemish composers, coalesced to provide the desired medium for an expression attained only with passion and deliberate subjectivity.<sup>6</sup>

Bloch in this passage assumes that the 15<sup>th</sup> – and the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> – century became the last instance of the academism of the monks and their tendency to consider the issues of polyphony and the counterpoint. Melodic elements were now stemming from the accord, and not from the melodic *logos* of the mode, nor from pure melodic flow. According to Bloch,

It was not until the art of Flemish composers that the soul of mediaeval Christianity found its full resonance [...] Ancient Greeks and the people of the Middle Ages remained almost silent musically.<sup>7</sup>

This passage is indicative of profound eurocentrism, as well as of the inauguration of one system of representation as a meta-position. In this process from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards to Bach and beyond, Bloch finds

[...] the mixing and the balancing of the lyrical and shaped element in a basically *architectonic*, *gothically-architectonic*, harmony and counterpoint which represents the special house of this lyricism, or what we might call its *spatially constitutive system*.<sup>8</sup>

It seems that creating polylinear systems opens up music for historical contingency as a form of almost infinitive possibilities for self-constitutive subjectivity.

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<sup>6</sup> Bloch, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 23.

Harmony operates as a *formula*; and entering fully into what is personally meaningful, the specific *rhythmicising*, their elegant, polyphonic, dramatic counterpoint, operates as a *work-form*, as a species, as a *signet-character* of the great composers.<sup>9</sup>

Great composers are simply great individuals. Bloch fully endorses Schopenhauer's view: understanding music is understanding philosophy. In that sense the Western music, as far as harmony is concerned, eventually passed into the sonant-contrapuntal space-substratum of the fugue or the collective symphony, while philosophically it moved towards the "lucid, qualitatively discontinuous historical space of a self-contained epoch or even the whole history of the world."<sup>10</sup> In other words, the evolution of Western classical music is the evolution of the very absolute.

But what about other musical forms, that set out to express the pure being of the cosmos and transcend the fragmentation of the object-relational subject? What about music as an icon of the *cosmos*, as reproduction of the cosmic condition? To Bloch any transcendence in which man does not appear as the result of historically conditioned subjectivity is just another form of mysticism. My thesis is that *the form of music stems directly from the relation to the ontical categories of time and space*, hence any variation in these representations results in different metaphysical significance with regard to musical heterogeneity, and therefore the difference in the musical form cannot be a category of ontologically stipulated evolutionary causality, as Bloch implies.

### III.

As far as Western music is concerned, the laws of perspective had a huge influence in the minds of artists during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, which resulted in the introduction of *space* to the temporal ontology of music. The music maintained its temporal modality, but only on the epistemological level, that of experience, depending on the transcendental possibilities of subjectivity. The temporality of music is not a cosmic thing. The introduction of polyphonic music in the West just followed the establishment of the perspective in painting and architecture as a comprehensive ontological model of art. For Schelling, music points towards architecture; every piece of music is just unfinished architecture, while architecture is "music in space," or

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 91-92.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 103.



“solidified music.”<sup>11</sup> Polyphony, in that sense, simulates space and transforms musical pieces into space-time systems. Melody and rhythm, the basic dynamic elements<sup>12</sup> of time in Byzantine music (and also, in the traditional music throughout the Ottoman Empire – Arabian, Persian and Indian), to Western music are just parts of (and in total dependence to) the statically-layered-like system of harmony and counterpoint, that evolved historically with no reference to any cosmic transcendence, and this due to the fact that the concept of the processual absolute is being conceived within concrete subjectivity; musical compositions started incorporating architectonic forms. Now each distinct part of the composition functioned as a whole, but it still remained in circular dependence to the whole piece, while the whole depended on the combination of its parts, exactly as an architect, a painter, or a sculptor combines his materials within a space-time continuum. In other words, music entered history as a mediated matter within the phenomenology of the *Geist*, by creating a spatial model in it due to the development of polyphony and counterpoint, and became a history of phenomenological subjective consciousness. Now one was able to judge any piece of music according to the historical knowledge that reveals its underlying philosophy and meta-position, according to the symmetry that characterizes it as a spatial system, according to the wholeness of the piece determined by its periphery that is now considered to incorporate the exact geometrical coordinates of the piece.

Several theoretical or historical papers discuss the development of Western music by means of precise and convincing descriptions of musical forms that assume that music primarily is a spatial entity, or at least an element within a space-time system. The flow of music is a system, since the parts do not exist independently, and they have no function or meaning of their own, nor individual characteristics; every change on any single part causes changes to all others, that is, there is mutual causal connection between them. The representation of any musical piece can only be completely spatial, like crossings from part A to part B to part C, in the existent space of coordinates in the type of continuous relations. The musical form consists in relations of order and relations of dependence, the relations of the sub-structures to the whole structure. The models of description are various: A+A+A+A, or A+B+A+B, or A+B+A+C+A; Mozart’s *Fantasy*, for example, consists of parts such as A theme, bridge, B theme, part of variations and development, B theme, bridge, A theme.

The pure experience of time even from the first notes of the composition is immediately represented by space. The real ontological duration of time

<sup>11</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 165.

<sup>12</sup> Χρυσάνθος, *Θεωρητικόν Μέγα τῆς Μουσικῆς* (Τεργέστη: Michele Weis, 1832).



is let down through the constructed musical space of blocks that interrelate simultaneously and successively, and because of some kind of music score counting, time becomes derivative from music, that is, it is now *mediated* time. To Bergson this is spatialized time as a “composite object,” *temps espace*, which is completely different from *temps durée*.<sup>13</sup> *Temps espace* is time already translated by the intellect according to space models, because of its geometrical tendency.<sup>14</sup> To the Western philosophical and mathematical intellect music is spatial-temporal; it is an abstraction of musical movement. The flow is two-dimensional – better, four-dimensional: next to the three dimensions of space there is also that of time, but only as a fourth dimension of space, as space-time. Music is a system of spatially-structured parts that are ordered in space in the form of composed music. Space is a whole that consists of the parts of this composition (theme, variations, variables, and different segments), and the relations among them being similar to ordinary space-relations. In a word, space is a significant property of the musical form.

All events happen in some space-time. In 1908 Herman Minkovski claimed: “No one ever perceives some place that wasn’t in some time, and no one perceives some time that wasn’t in some place.”<sup>15</sup> From that perspective any difference between space and time becomes completely transparent. Bergson and the Byzantines would never accept such a view. To the space-representable model of music, ontology is completely irrelevant, regardless of whether one adheres to the Euclidian geometry, or to curved-space ones. Time is equalized to the directions of space. The space-time continuum is born within geometry, and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century geometry evolved from being static, to being dynamical. Space and time are dynamic properties that influence all things, but they are also in turn influenced by the things that are contained within them.

But why did Eastern classical and old secular music simply exclude the laws of perspective from all authentic musical forms? According to Schopenhauer, music is at the top of the hierarchy of art, while architecture is to be found several steps below. Architecture is dealing with matter and, hence, with the highest level of causality. Music, on the other hand, is free from all causality, since it deals with tones, and its ontology is temporal: the movement in music is an irrational infinite pursuit, which makes it a pure objectification of the metaphysical foundations of the world. Music is “a

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<sup>13</sup> Henri Bergson, *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Random House, 1944), 214.

<sup>15</sup> Gerald James Whitrow, *What is Time?* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 106.

copy of the Will itself.”<sup>16</sup> According to Bergson, life – and the essence of life itself – is duration (*durée*), and it should comprise intuition as well, and not only intelligence. Intelligence is just a direction that evolution has taken, a space-modeled element of life useful for practical reasons, for adapting to the world. Intelligence is a *mathematism*, not in a mystical sense, but more like a calculus. The ontology of the world is temporal, since the world exists in duration; the world constitutes a continuum that our intellect cuts into segments, just like the camera does with the frames, and by virtue of this process duration is being abolished.

When it comes to music, or to the *musical being*, the intellect also intervenes camera-like. Although the aesthetical subject is plunged into the pure temporal movement of music, through the spatial model it transcendently over-constitutes the musical being, and masters it as if it were a merely limited object. Every musical piece becomes a system of monads of unity that give up their place to each other. Our mind perceives and comprehends those monads as moving blocks, as a system-object that becomes apprehensible as the intellect moves around it. The openness of musical pieces is not an inherent ontological property of theirs; it is rather a feature that emerges by virtue of historical hermeneutics and interpretation.

#### IV.

Any discussion about the philosophy of Byzantine music that would remain steadily fixed on Koukouzelis would necessarily be directed towards several facts concerning its outer phenomenology, facts that could be taken to be indicative of its essence; first and foremost, such a discussion should address the form of notation. Western notation consists in a five-line system, where signs are marked as denotations of concrete tones, something like a stenographic description of tones. This is quite telling about the space-representational model, and explains Karl Dahlhaus' claim about musical movement: “we need to have carrier of the movement,” and “the higher tone which is following the deeper tone is rather ‘other’ tone than the ‘same’ tone on the other place.”<sup>17</sup> Byzantine notation, on the other hand, is completely different; it doesn't mark concrete tones on stable positions, but voice movements instead, as well as intervals and jumps. Byzantine notation indicates the duration by a horizontal direction of the movement. Melody, not tones, is the carrier and the subject of the movement. Thus, music acquires a purely temporal model of representation. Within that spirit, some among the *kratimas* are for

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<sup>16</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E. F. J. Paine (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 257.

<sup>17</sup> Berislav Popović, *Muzička Forma ili Smisao u Muzici* (Beograd: Clio, 1998), 62.

example: *potamis* (river-like), *aidonaton* (nightingale-like, a clear reference on the natural ecstasy of the bird), *monopnoi* (in one breath) and so on. Counterpoint makes sense only if we perceive melody as a string of spatially separate points of time  $\tau_1$ ,  $\tau_2$ ,  $\tau_3$ , and so on; if, however, time is seen as a continuous duration, only indivisible melodic flow is capable of giving it any meaningful content.

Second, in Byzantine music there is no vertical harmony, but only a kind of horizontal harmony, a drone, *ison*, which consists in singing the basic tone of the mode, and outlines the interval relation within the mode. The Byzantine music has an iconic structure, and there is absolutely no perspective in it. The *ison* is the musical equivalent of the golden background that is used in Byzantine iconography, being a symbol of the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit.

Third, the foundation of monophony is ecclesial as well as ontological. Monophony substantiates the *ecclesia*, the one Mind, and constitutes the line of demarcation between an accidental gathering of individuals, and a purposeful assembly of persons.

Fourth, the extensive *papadiki* pieces are of an open form; they function as unfinished pieces of pure duration with no system limitations imposed by the transcendental sphere of reason. Symmetry is completely deconstructed, or at least it is not possible to assume any concrete notion of it. This is due to long musical lines, which do not create parts that follow each other within a spatial system of succession – there are no A, B, C models, etc. The repetition of the paradigmatic melodic formulas that are linked to modes express only the objective nature of each mode; they create a sense of infinite play and volatility, rather than that of a stable, consistent structure.

Fifth, musical pieces from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, especially the *Mathimatas*, are often composed in one mode; quite often, however, during chanting they shift to several other modes without any transcendental reason. For example, the composition with the title *Τόν Δεσπότην* in *Varis* mode begins in lower ZO and stays in that mode only for a while; after that, it shifts to *inner First* mode till the end, concluding not on the basis of this mode, but on that of another dominant tone, leaving its form open and unfinished. Also, the work of Koukouzelis *Κύριε εν τω φωτί του προσώπου σου* in *Varis* mode uses the basic tone GA only as starting point, and the *melos* moves through the *First* mode to tone KE and its plagal mode the whole time, with some short intervals in the *Fourth* mode and its plagal mode, and ends with a short typical cadence of *Varis* mode on its basic tone GA.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Most of the classical *papadiki* compositions are collected in 'Ιωάννης Λαμπαδάριος και Στέφανος Δομέστικος. *Πανδέκτη της Ιερής Εκκλησιαστικής Υμνωδίας του Όλου Ενιαυτού* (Κωνσταντινούπολη: Πατριαρχικόν Τυπογραφείον, 1851), in 4 volumes; also in Θεόδωρος Π.

Sixth, the aesthetical subject is drawn into the pure duration of the musical movement, and its transcendental solidity is governed by the transcendent being, and not vice versa. Pure musical flow creates the notion of unattainable cosmic *sublime*. In Schopenhauer's terms within Byzantine music the subject becomes an abstract subject of knowledge, and it derives trans-historical subjectivity as a beauty that bursts from the sublime, quite opposite to what Bloch assumes.

In the light of Rodin's analysis of the sculpture of St. John the Baptist, especially concerning the illusion of movement the structure conveys, one could assume that music and movement is a model for sculpture, and not the opposite. In reality time doesn't stop, and if the artist succeeds in conveying the impression of the gesture that lasts only for a few minutes, his work will be less conditioned than the scientific *eidos* in which time suddenly interrupts its flow. For Bergson and Schopenhauer, as well as for Byzantine composers also, the world and the universe have a *musical being*, because they simply last in time. Where is yesterday? Where is the world-space that was created just a minute ago? My voice vanishes within this infinite universe. This is pure duration as a real medium of world ontology. The Byzantine music stays fixed on the Platonic narrative concerning the creation of the world in *Timaeus*: the creator creates this world as a 'kinetic icon of the infinity.' Time is an icon in movement, "an infinite reflection of the infinity which moves according to the rules of numerology."<sup>19</sup> The ontology of the world is very close to the psychical being. Consciousness is of temporal being, and the world is of temporal flow. Music is the pure and accurate expression of that ontology, and this is why the Eastern musical tradition keeps this form. The works of Koukouzelis are pure duration, pure movement of the flow of time fulfilled within the musical content, it is time that has shaped its ontology as expression. The human voice is the carrier of the *logoi* of the modes as concrete *tropes* of the Glory of God. According to John Chrysostom, God forces melody to enter the world of humans (την μελωδίαν ταύτην κατένευσεν προς ημάς), exactly as he did himself. The musical *logoi* that exist in the world participate in the Logos of God as dynamical patterns of the constant creation of Christ. Christ is the *Pantocrator*; he recreates the world infinitely by means of the *spermatikoi logoi* he placed in the world at the very moment of creation. Koukouzelis creates dynamic pieces; they aspire to be forms of the duration of his internal time; there is no symmetry in them because they represent the movements of his soul, his personality as a continuous

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Παράσκου, *Ειρμολόγιον Καλοφωνικόν* (Κωνσταντινούπολη: Τυπογραφία Κάστρου, 1835). In addition to the above see also Γρηγόριος Στάθης, *Οι Αναγραμματισμοί και τὰ Μαθήματα τῆς Βυζαντινῆς Μελοδοσίας* (Ἀθήνα: Ἰδρυμα Βυζαντινῆς Μουσικολογίας, 1979).

<sup>19</sup> Plato, *Timaeus*, 37c-38b.

relentless cry. Paradoxically, by giving the essence of time, of pure time, by using an ontology of time in his music, by seeing pure duration as a medium, he creates a notion of eternity. Unexpectedly, the being of time becomes a key to sublime eternity. Each one of Koukouzelis' pieces may last either for five or thirty minutes; it could start and end at random points, after different ending cadences, because there is no spatial representation within it.

## V.

The Western music has its naturalistic foundation in the sensually-oriented epistemological field of Western mentality that evolved from late Middle Ages through the Renaissance till nowadays. Obviously, different forms of art emerge from the context of each culture, and depend on the way each culture feels the world. Maybe the naturalism of the Roman Church painting has its roots in the secularization of culture, or, again, it may be rooted deep in the *historical a priori*; this *episteme* probably has its analogous in music, as well; it is a *feeling*: the inner tendency to feel the *eidos* sensually, to imitate the thing in a sensual manner, or to feel the empirical fact as a symbol. This is the Byzantine experience. For Pavel Florensky, "the perspective is not perceptual fact, but a transcendental need."<sup>20</sup> It is just one among the more possible receptions of the symbolic expressionableness, and *it's not universal*. This is neither a Hegelian, nor a *Eurocentric* philosophical reflection. The Byzantine music and art in general do not spatialize what they set out to express, but its life instead, the *pleroma* of its temporal being. Temporality simply doesn't allow for a fixed expression of the world, and this negative dialectic creates forms that aspire to catch some synthetical *eidos* of the substance. In order to catch the temporal icon of infinity by creating music, one has to create music the way Koukouzelis did.

The musical *eidos* has a life in its self; it constantly changes, pulses, and opens itself up to deep spiritual insight from all aspects. The music created by Koukouzelis incorporates all the philosophical and theological tropes and maneuvers of the Orthodox philosophical and aesthetical thought. For instance, in the great melodies of Koukouzelis one can find the doctrine of *logoi* of Maximus the Confessor, and his insights into the creation as genesis – kinesis – stasis, and this is quite opposite to Neo-Platonism and Hegel. *Stasis* becomes reality, an eschatological eternal being that realizes itself only through the *kinesis* of the world that is being caused by the dynamic nature of the *logoi*. To the Byzantine aesthetical mind beauty is a Truth that enters history, but still remains an absolute idea; it has no history, but not

<sup>20</sup> Pavel Florensky, *Iconostasis*, trans. Donald Sheehnan and Olga Andrejev (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 232.

because it is an abstract, unidentifiable idea: it is the divine *Logos*. Church music is an expression of Christ and its body, its ecclesia as a trans-territory.

It isn't possible to evaluate forms of art through meta-positions, and this due to the temporal perspective of being. To understand the foundations of the philosophy that underlies Byzantine music, one must keep in mind that this music simply refuses to assume anything accidental, contingent, subjective, capricious or arbitrarily. It is a choice that ignores the history of subjective musical expression; it is form with no naturalistic color created by instruments, without theoretical elaboration in Blochian sense. In the essence it is a matter of stylistic unity.

It is obvious that it is impossible to appreciate the Western music through the Byzantine system of representation, and vice versa. These two paths remained two distinct ontological formations of the same civilization, divergent forms of the same life. Is it possible that in the future the European spirit will create musical forms that will synthesize both these musical experiences? This prospect doesn't seem very likely: Byzantine music remained sacred, while Western music deliberately moved towards secular perspectives. What about twelve-tone serialism and Schoenberg's legacy? It refers to polyphony in a way that it binds the process of deconstruction with what is being deconstructed, but also, it reveals the same space models of contrapuntal combination of tones. Is it possible that current global tendencies in music will pave the ground for some kind of synthesis in the future, for the creation of aesthetical "synchronic machines" that presuppose the Western perspective of subjectivity, but also render it susceptible to new notions of harmony derived from time ontology? What I have in mind is David Bowie's album *Blackstar*, which is metaphorically connected with time and the experience of dying. *Blackstar* in its essence constitutes a quite ascetic perspective: what happens to the space a human being occupies after this person dies? In the case of Koukouzelis, he just transubstantiated the space he occupied into musical time.

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