

Faith and Christian Identity in the Emerging Culture

VARGHESE MALIAKKAL, OCD

Introduction

Post is a concept that occurs very often in various aspects of our present day life. Many are of the opinion that we are living in the time of *post* – postindustrialism, postmarxism, posthistory, posthumanism, postmodernism. The word *post* means a historical sequence in which a previous state of affairs is superseded. Thus the word *post* functions *prima facie* as a periodizing term. It is curious to note that very often the term *post* is taken with suspicion and panic because of the implication of discontinuity in the sense of passing of the old and the advent of the new. The reason for this panic and suspicion is that there was an underlying principle, which can be called the modern paradigm, present in the various levels in the emerging culture of the 15th and 16th centuries. This principle of modern paradigm continued its triumphant journey manifesting its dominant presence in the time of the American and French Revolutions. Now this leading principle of modern paradigm is in great crisis at all levels. The crisis is seen in many levels: from the values of humanism to the deterministic and mechanistic logic of the sciences to the ideology of growth and progress. As a result of this, now an emerging postmodern paradigm is organized around a set of concepts, shared methodological assumptions, and a general sensibility. This paradigm shows certain tendencies. It attacks modern methods and concepts as overly totalizing and reductionistic; it decries utopian and humanistic values as dystopian and dehumanizing; it abandons mechanical and deterministic schemes in favour of new principles of chaos, contingency, spontaneity, and organism; it challenges all beliefs in foundations, absolutes, truth, and objectivity, often to embrace a radical skepticism, relativism, and nihilism, and it subverts boundaries of all kinds¹. In essence, postmodernism is a type of thinking that rebels against any totalizing understanding of reality, against any “grand meta-

¹ Cf. S. BEST, D. KELLNER, *The Postmodern Turn*, New York 1997, p. 19.

narrative². It is opposed to universalization, rationalization, systematization, and the establishment of consistent criteria for the evaluation of truth-claims. By rejecting these modernist parameters, the postmodernists are in favour of new emphasis on difference, plurality, fragmentation, and complexity². It is in this intellectual and cultural contexts we are thinking about faith and Christian identity in the emerging culture. In this article I would like to approach the problem by showing various changes occurred throughout the history in the understanding of *epistème* which was considered to be true knowledge. In this age of plurality and difference it is very difficult to find *epistème* to hold on with certainty. If *epistème* has disappeared in the emerging culture, can we speak about faith and Christian identity?

1. The twilight of *Epistème* in philosophy

Let us start with a question. Can we consider the above stated postmodern turn and the consequent change of attitude as a paradigm shift in a Kuhnian sense? In order to answer this question we have to make an analysis of the very foundation of the western culture. This foundation can be seen in the acceptance of knowledge as *epistème*. Therefore we have to examine how the concept of *epistème* changed in the history of philosophy and science. In the texts such as *Republic* and *Theaitetos* Plato explains his epistemological theories. The problems which Plato has encountered in these texts are very much similar to questions which contemporary epistemology is interested in. Plato is very much concerned with the distinction between true and false belief, between knowledge and belief. The focus on the distinction between *dóxa* and *epistème* is something very important. *Dóxa* is perspectival. Therefore it can be either true or false. But in the case of *epistème* even though it can have degrees; as superficial or deep knowledge, in its strict sense *epistème* is something which someone either has –and then completely- or does not have at all³. *Dóxa* can be understood as belief, as judgment, as opinion and as an interpretation. *Dóxa* is different from *epistème* because the latter implies that the object is not being interpreted or assessed, but grasped. *Epistème* is superior to *dóxa*, and its superiority seems to reside in the directness with which a man who knows is related to what is really the case, and consequently infallibility of knowledge. *Dóxa* on the other hand is fallible.

² This attitude is evident in many contemporary authors. Derrida espouses the philosophy of *différance*, Lyotard defends the *différend*, Rorty calls for a multiplicity of cultural voices.

³ PLATO, *Republic*, V 476e - 480a. «Opinion and knowledge, then, having distinct objects, must also be distinct faculties. And by faculties I mean powers unseen and distinguishable only by the difference in their objects, as opinion and knowledge differ, since the one is liable to err, but the other is unerring and is the mightiest of all our faculties. If being is the object of knowledge, and not-being of ignorance, and these are the extremes, opinion must lie between them, and may be called darker than the one and brighter than the other». PLATO, *Republic*, V 478.

Epistème as knowledge is something which exists at the rational level whereas *dóxa* as opinion or belief is confined to the level at which sense-perception is decisive and at which emotional appeals can be effective. Knowledge is connected with understanding⁴.

In the course of history we see that *epistème*, considered as the sure knowledge, became synonym with philosophy. Thus philosophy is enthroned as the queen science and the solid terrain on which the western culture is constructed. Slowly it included the phenomena of religion, culture, politics, economics in it with their forms of institutions, structures and convictions with the same immutable and absolute nature of *epistème*. It is *epistème* which confers truth, immutability, absoluteness and definitiveness to all these structures. Truth as *epistème* becomes pre-requisite and terrain where the religious, moral, political, economic, and juridical truth is understood. It is *epistème* as solid foundation which sustained Christian faith, institution of marriage, family as immutable and absolute value⁵. Thus *epistème* becomes the norm and basis of everything. After the enthronement of *epistème* in the throne of knowledge we see a gradual building up of everything on this strong basis. This foundationalist endeavor lasted up to the end of scholastic philosophy. With the dawn of modern era the philosophers began to question the very basis of its credibility. So by the time of Immanuel Kant we see a lot of gaps and chasms in the rockbottom level of *epistème*. Then in Bradely and Brand Blanshard we see futile attempts to web the gaps followed by the attempts of Kierkegaard and William James to leap the gap. Kierkegaard proposed a passionate call for faith by virtue of the absurd⁶. In the 20th century we see many important movements and they express their uneasiness with central modern presumptions. Among these movements we have the post-structuralist thinkers. They proclaimed the dawn of the postmodern age. In their endeavor to repudiate everything modern declare the end of metaphysics, the end of epistemology, and the end of philosophy. The reason is very clear these branches of knowledge are hegemonic and totalizing, and thus fit only for the dust bin⁷. Rorty even proposes that the traditional philosophers who speak in terms of truth and falsity should be replaced by ironist philosophers who accept the fact that no proposal is final. This is because, the ironists think that nothing has an intrinsic nature, a real essence. Therefore the terms like just, scientific or rational in the final vocabulary of the day do not allow us to think that Socratic inquiry into the essence of justice or science or rationality will take one much beyond the language games of one's time. Any final vocabulary is only a poetic achievement rather

⁴ Cf. I. M. CROMBIE, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines: Plato on Knowledge and Reality*, London 1979, p. 36.

⁵ Cf. E. SEVERINO, *La filosofia dai greci al nostro tempo. La filosofia contemporanea*, Milano 1996, p. 282.

⁶ Cf. F. FERRÉ, *Knowing and Value: Toward a Constructive Postmodern Epistemology*, New York 1998, p. 244.

⁷ Cf. F. FERRÉ, *Knowing and Value: Toward a Constructive Postmodern Epistemology*, p. 270.

than fruits of diligent inquiry according to antecedently formulated criteria⁸. Hence any claim of the metaphysician who thinks that he has discovered the essence of a reality, hence the truth about it is in deception.

2. The downfall of *Epistème* in Science

From our above analysis it is clear that philosophy as the habitat of *epistème* continued its powerful regime until the dawn of science as understood in the modern sense. With the growth of the positive sciences philosophy slowly lost its throne and the throne of *epistème* was conquered by science. Modern science from its very beginning is considered as *epistème* or it is better to say science is considered as the authentic *epistème* in contrast with epistemic pretext of philosophy. When science became the habitat of *epistème* we see the shaking of the old systems and institutions founded on the *epistème* of philosophy.

Science with its capacity of demonstration, prediction and verifiability declared itself to be the very incarnation of *epistème*. But the history of science reveals that the *epistème* of the science is also shaking because of the influence of postmodernism. In science the postmodern turn emerged as a break from the mechanistic, reductionist, naïve realist, and determinist worldview of Newtonian physics. In 1900 Max Plank discovered that in certain situations energy does not proceed regularly but in jumps: these jumps are called *quanta*. Later in 1905 Einstein proposed his relativity theory, introducing time into the relationships of energy and mass. Twenty years later physicist Werner Heisenberg not only discovered but proved that in certain subatomic situations neither classical objectivity nor mechanical causality applied. Much later Ilya Prigogine with his discovery of dissipative systems which are thermodynamically opened exposed negentropy which shows instability, hence uncertainty. This created a big crack in the fundament of Descartes's and Newton's objectivism and determinism⁹. The quantum mechanics, theory of relativity, principles of Thermodynamics made cracks in the strong *epistème* of science and made it an indeterminate and probable knowledge. Thus, in the twentieth century science, we see a move from objectivity to subjectivity and from determinism to indeterminism. It is in this context we can speak about postmodern science. The advocates of postmodern science claim that the modern scientific paradigm is giving way to a new mode of scientific thinking based on concepts such as entropy, evolution, organism, indeterminacy, probability, relativity, complementarity, interpretation, chaos, complexity, and self-organization. Thus slowly science gave up its claim to be the *epistème*. Science accepted its impossibility to be defini-

⁸ Cf. R. RORTY, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Cambridge 1989, p. 77.

⁹ Cf. J. LUKACS, *At the End of an Age*, London 2002, p. 96.

tive, incontrovertible, absolute, and declared itself to be hypothetical, subjected to revision and fallibility. Thus science loses its dignity as *epistème* and counted as a mere conjecture and opinion, thus science becomes *dóxa* which is in contraposition with *epistème*¹⁰. Words like falsifiability, demarcation, corroboration, commensurability, verisimilitude etc. show lack of exactness of scientific knowledge. When the theory of falsifiability is accepted, all the theories become mere conjectures, then we have to speak about verisimilitude and approximation to truth¹¹. The net result of all these is expressed clearly in the words of Popper. He says that, “science is not a system of well-established statements; nor is it a system which steadily advances towards a state of finality. Our science is not knowledge (*epistème*): it can never claim to have attained truth, or even a substitute for it, such as probability”¹².

Thomas Kuhn with his demonstration of non permanency, hence the lack of foundation and absoluteness of the scientific theories and Karl Popper by showing the history of science as the cemetery of the dead scientific theories, took *epistème* to its decline. Once the certainty of the knowledge is placed in the shadow of doubt, *epistème* is replaced with *dóxa* even in science. The era of *post* is the time of nonfoundationist attitude because in essence, postmodernism is a type of thinking that rebels against any totalizing understanding of reality, against any ‘grand meta-narrative’. It is opposed to universalization, systematization, and the establishment of consistent criteria for the evaluation of truth-claims¹³.

3. The Postmodern turn of Philosophy and Science

When philosophy lost its ground to be in the throne of *epistème* it took another direction. This is very evident in the shift of importance from intellect to will. Nietzsche plays that card fascinating everybody. Thus we see him presenting the ancient Greek divinities Apollo and Dionysius. According to Nietzsche the European culture is always interpreted only with reference to one element, that of Apollo. Therefore everything is interpreted as beauty and harmony, as measure and proportion, represented by sculpture, which are elements of reason. Besides sculpture Greeks knew another dimension, music, which is represented by Dionysius. In music we have chaos, the irresistible flow of impulses and life¹⁴. When intellect

⁹ Cf. J. LUKACS, *At the End of an Age*, London 2002, p. 96.

¹⁰ Cf. E. SEVERINO, *La filosofia dai greci al nostro tempo. La filosofia contemporanea*, p. 283.

¹¹ Cf. V. MALIACKAL, «Truth between Science and Mysticism: Spiritual experience of Teresa in the light of Contemporary Epistemology», *Teresianum* 61 (2010) 183.

¹² K.R. POPPER, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London 2004, p. 278.

¹³ V.E. TAYLOR, C.E. WINQUIST, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Postmodernism*, London 2001. p. 304 ff.

¹⁴ Cf. E. SIMONOTTI, *La svolta antropologica. Scheller interprete di Nietzsche*, Pisa 2006, p. 24.

is replaced with will, when reason is replaced with desire, the concept of man as rational animal is changed into desiring machine. Nietzsche is followed by Heidegger and Wittgenstein forming a triad to be fathers of post-modernism. Nietzsche presented a man without a religious and transcendental attitude, who affirms his identity in his faithfulness to earth without God and truth, thus beyond good and evil. Heidegger presents a man expropriated by being and truth, and language. Wittgenstein presents a man who is not able to find meaning in things, in life, and in the world¹⁵. This results in a skeptical attitude towards truth, unity, and progress, and opposition towards what it sees as elitism in culture, tends toward cultural relativism, and celebrates pluralism and discontinuity. Hence the typical postmodern conclusion, that universal truth is impossible, and relativism is our fate. Relativism shows that truth itself is always relative to the differing standpoints and predisposing intellectual frameworks of the judging subject. Nihilism is the natural consequence of all these.

The twilight of *epistème* in science creates anxiety. This is because for the ancient Greeks human action is expressed in two ways: as *prâxis* and as *poïesis*. *Poïesis* is concerned with doing, in the sense of giving form, creating something; and *prâxis* is concerned with human actions in the sense, of which of the possible actions is to be performed. As it is clear from the very idea of *prâxis*, it needs wisdom to choose the right action. This is the reason why Plato and Aristotle were speaking about *phrónesis* the science of good and evil in the process of choice¹⁶. *Poïesis*, as the science of making- *techné*, should be backed with *epistème* and *phrónesis*. This is because with *prâxis* and *poïesis* man cannot dominate but can only disclose the mysteries of nature. It is from this vision truth is defined as *a-letheia*, disclosing of nature¹⁷. Therefore it is from the contemplation or *epistème* the knowledge of action is born. When *theoria* (knowledge) is coupled with *phrónesis* (wisdom of right action) good *techné* is born. What we see in the contemporary scientific community is the disappearance of *phrónesis*. Without right criterion reason becomes mere instrumental reason. When there is no distinction between what is capable of doing and what should not be done, one makes what he is capable of making. This is the reason why now we are facing new challenges coming from science. In the field of technology there are new challenges raised by cybernetics, cyberspace, and artifacts like: humanoid, hybrid, android, cyborg and the like. In the field of genetic engineering we are capable of making human being at choice, human being as photocopy and all sorts of chimeric creatures. All these show a growing tendency towards humanization of machines and mechanization of human being. Thus we verify an inclination towards the reification of human being due to the absence of a solid ground or accepted measurement of reality as *epistème*. In the emerging scientific

¹⁵ Cf. I. SANNA, *L'antropologia cristiana tra modernità e postmodernità*, Brescia 2004, p. 170 ff.

¹⁶ Cf. ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.

¹⁷ Cf. U. GALIMBERTI, *Psiche e techné. L'uomo nell'età della tecnica*, Milano 2009, p. 278.

culture what we witness is an unchained Prometheus who marches ahead with his continuous and uncontrolled process of creation with no one powerful enough to tie him up. That was why we said that twilight of *epistème* in science creates anxiety. In all these what we see is the replacement of intellect with will.

Epistème and Faith

First of all we have to say that Theology is not identical to metaphysics. Theology is explicitly the language of a community of religious belief; metaphysics is in principle independent of such communities¹⁸. But at the same time faith is to be explained. Hence Christian doctrine needs certain views of philosophy,¹⁹ not for the sake of its ultimacy, of course, which is guaranteed by God alone, but for the sake of its logical explication. Faith needs philosophy to have a notion of truth and to have a key of interpretation²⁰. Philosophy as a notion of truth gives cognitive status to theological statements by making it truly mediative, allowing for ostensive and representational elements. Philosophy by giving an interpretative key to the affirmations of faith, helps it to claim coherency that there are certain perduring belief, normative from epoch to epoch, from culture to culture²¹.

Our analysis of philosophy and science evidenced how *epistème* is reduced to *dóxa* in both these departments of knowledge, leading the contemporary society into fluidification depriving it of its consistency and solidity. Given this epistemic situation, can the Christian notion of theological doctrine and contemporary philosophical accents be reconciled? Are they at absolute loggerheads? In this context we can ask, when *epistème* is moved to *dóxa*, leaving everything uncertain, can we speak about anything which is really foundational or can we speak about anything called *deep truth*. Deep truth refers to anything to the kind of knowl-

¹⁸ F. FERRÉ, *Being and Value: toward a constructive postmodern metaphysics*, p. 376.

¹⁹ John Paul II emphasizes the need of philosophy in his Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*. Metaphysics plays an essential role of mediation in theological research. A theology without a metaphysical horizon could not move beyond an analysis of religious experience, nor would it allow the *intellectus fidei* to give a coherent account of the universal and transcendent value of revealed truth (FR 83). The importance of metaphysics becomes still more evident if we consider current developments in hermeneutics and the analysis of language. The results of such studies can be very helpful for the understanding of faith, since they bring to light the structure of our thought and speech and the meaning which language bears (F.R. 84).

²⁰ The Papal encyclical *Fides et Ratio* claims that «faith clearly presupposes that human language is capable of expressing divine and transcendent reality in a universal way-analogically, it is true, but no less meaningfully for that». Where this not the case the encyclical continues, «the word of God, which is always a divine word in human language, would be incapable of saying anything about God» (84). With a clear but implicit reference to recent postmodern and Derridian trends, the encyclical continues, «The interpretation of this word of God cannot merely keep referring us to one interpretation after another, without ever leading to a statement which is simply true; otherwise, there would be no Revelation of God, but only the expression of human notions about God»(84).

²¹ T. G. GUARINO, *Foundations of Systematic Theology*, New York 2005, p. 209.

edge which forms the very self-understanding of persons. When we examine our personal knowledge we come across with two types of ideas. Ideas *occurring* to or being adopted by us and our *basic* ideas. The basic ideas can be called beliefs. The beliefs do not rise at an appointed time *within* our lives; we do not arrive at them with particular act of thinking. Speaking about the distinction between these two types of ideas, Ortega y Gasset distinguishes two kinds of knowledge or ideas: «ideas which we *have* and ideas which we *are*»²². Our beliefs make the container of our lives, therefore they do not become content within our lives. Deep truth is constituted by “ideas which we *are*”. Gasset’s formulation of *creencias* offers a provocative analysis of knowledge functions as deep truth. *Creencias* are ideas we live *from* or *out of*. In contrast to ideas which we discover, produce, support, and argue with, *creencias* are those ideas which «we do not produce, for which we cannot even account normally, and which we neither argue, or spread, nor support. Ultimately we do nothing at all to these certainties of faith, we simply live *in* them, we are placed in them with a sure sense, popular language found the expression “to live in the faith”. Indeed, one *is* in faith and one *has* and maintains a thought; but faith is that which *has* us and maintains us. There are therefore ideas *with* which we encounter ourselves... And there are *creencias* in which we encounter ourselves, which seem to be present before we begin to think»²³. Once this distinction is made faith becomes something existential, something which is in the very root of our being. Thus it remains undisturbed and unchallenged.

In this context we may have to speak about *core beliefs*. This is because some beliefs are more important than others. The measure of the importance of a belief is not whether they are logically primitive but whether they are psychologically central. Therefore logical procedure is not the criterion in the formation of beliefs which are psychologically central. A belief system is not a logical system²⁴. About beliefs we can make the observation that while some beliefs are primary, others are derivative; and while some are psychologically central others are peripheral. But there is another dimension in every belief system by which certain sets of beliefs are held more or less in isolation from other sets and protected from any relationship with other sets of beliefs. Each of these dimensions has to do not with the content of our beliefs, but the *way* hold them²⁵.

Beliefs can be held evidently or non-evidently. When a belief is held on the basis of evidence or reasons, it can be rationally criticized, and therefore can be modified in the light of further evidence or better reasons,

²² J. ORTEGA Y GASSET, *What is Knowledge*, Trans. Jorge Garcia Gómez, New York 2002, p. 178.

²³ J. ORTEGA Y GASSET, *What is Knowledge*, p. 179.

²⁴ Cf. T. F. GREEN, «Indoctrination and Beliefs», in: I.A. SNOOK, ed., *Concepts of Indoctrination: Philosophical Essays*, London 1972, p. 32.

²⁵ Cf. T. F. GREEN, «Indoctrination and Beliefs», p. 33.

then we shall say they are held evidentially. But when beliefs are held without regard to evidence or contrary to evidence, or apart from good reason or the canons for testing reasons and evidence, they are held non-evidentially. A belief held non-evidentially cannot be modified by introducing new reason or evidence. This difference has nothing to do with the contents of belief. It is perfectly possible that two persons may hold to the same belief and yet one may do so evidently and the other non-evidently. It is possible, to indoctrinate people into the truth. The only problem is that they will not *know* that it is the truth. They will only know that it is a *correct* belief. That is to say, they will hold to certain true beliefs, but will be unable to give any adequate reasons for them, any clear account for them in their support beyond logically irrelevant observation that they are commonly held beliefs. And yet we cannot be said to *know* that a belief is true, if we cannot give any reasons for it, any explanation of it or any evidence in support of it. Thus even if the beliefs one holds are true, one cannot be said to know they are true, if they are believed in this non-evidential fashion. They can only be known to be *correct* beliefs, and that is one of the features of beliefs held as a consequence of indoctrination²⁶.

Can we give rational explanation to our beliefs? The history of western thought is a continuous effort to give rational explanation to everything. That is why Leibniz speaks about the principle of sufficient reason. When we consider sufficient reason in philosophy and theology we may have to think a little about the phenomenology of foreign experience because it has a considerable influence on philosophy and Christian theology in contemporary conversations. How can the givenness of experience (including the experience of God) be described? For this we have to make a distinction between doctrinal formulation and catechetical instruction. Religious experience points a perceptual consciousness in which foreign experience comes to givenness as a kind of perceiving *sui generis*, that is it is different from the experience of objects in the world. What we have to search for is a going beyond metaphysics. Overcoming of philosophy means moving beyond the strictly rational foundations which give philosophy its metaphysical grounding. Heidegger, analyzing the *Principle of sufficient reason* of Leibniz in the light of Angelus Silesius's meditation, comments that «the rose is rose without why». When we say the rose is without a why it does not mean that it is without a ground²⁷. But when we speak about sufficient reason, the question is to whom or what reason be rendered? The answer is to human who determine objects as objects by way of a representation that judges²⁸. When Leibniz took the principle of sufficient reason as the manifestation of the truth of being, Angelicus says

²⁶ Cf. T. F. GREEN, «Indoctrination and Beliefs», p. 34.

²⁷ Cf. M. F. ANDREWS, «Religion without why: Edith Stein and Martin Heidegger on the Overcoming of Metaphysics, with Particular Reference to Angelus Silesius and Denys the Areopagite», in: *Acta Analecta Husserliana*, vol. LXXXIX, New Hampshire 2006, p. 405.

²⁸ M. HEIDEGGER, *The Principle of Reason*, p. 119.

that the rose blooms because it blooms. This means the rose is sufficient unto itself, and neither needs nor desires rational legitimation, language, or external justification in order for it to be the entity this it is: it pays no attention to itself, asks not whether it is seen. This means the *because* by which the rose blooms does not point to something other than the blooming itself. It is non-representational. The blooming of the rose is grounded in itself, not in an extrinsic principle which can be known outside itself. The rose is without why²⁹.

Edith Stein also is referring to such an attitude³⁰. In her writings about the way to know God she says that «higher the knowledge of God, the darker and more mysterious it is, the less it can be put into words. The ascent to God is an ascent into darkness and silence»³¹. If this is the case we cannot speak meaningfully about something so transcendent, an experience in which one feels that he is seized by God. It is here we feel the need of a symbolic theology to describe the experience of God which is essentially unknowable. When one reaches «high degree of knowledge of God, both «positive and negative theologies give way to mystical theology which in utter stillness enters into union with the Ineffable»³². Thus religious belief remains absent and inaccessible to the grasp of reason. One believes without a why as Stein says «the summit of mystical theology the condition of possibility of philosophical thinking is structurally similar to the givenness of Christian revelation. Philosophy, like revelation, must leap beyond the Principle of Sufficient Reason without giving any sufficient reason to do so. Stein's application of apophatic theology, therefore, does not merely offer a casual attempt to think beyond metaphysics»³³. As a phenomenon, "experience of God" never quite appears, except to the extent that I am called, invited, commanded to listen to the silence which precedes every condition of possibility of hearing. The "name" is not the name of reason, nor is it the name of faith.

²⁹ M. F. ANDREWS, «Religion without why: Edith Stein and Martin Heidegger...», p. 407.

³⁰ In phenomenology Edith Stein and Robert Sokolowski use phenomenological approach in philosophical theology that focus on the mystery of God. Sokolowski shows how the God of revelation and faith, who is beyond the power of our reason to grasp fully, is nonetheless accessible to our intellect to a significant degree. By attending to contrast or by making distinctions between things, distinctions that for the most part would not spring to mind without the Bible and the practice of the Christian faith, the mind comes to apprehend the reality of God. critical words such as incarnation, redemption, love, and hope do not simply mane things that show up in human experience. What they name is determined crucially by the God who is involved with them. (Diogenes Allen, Eric O. Springersted, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, p. 207)

³¹ Cf. E. STEIN, *Ways to know God: The Symbolic Theology of Dionysius the Areopagite and Its Objective Presuppositions*, «The Collected Works of Edith Stein, Volume VIII, Walter Redmond (trans.) ICS Publications, Washington, DC 2000, p. 87.

³² E. STEIN, *Ways to know God*, p. 89.

³³ M.F. ANDREWS, «Religion without why...», p. 418.

Conclusion

Faith, as a response to the Divine revelation is one of the important characteristics of Christianity. It is the presence of faith implied in the Christian philosophy that forced modernists to exclude it from the pure arena of philosophy accusing it being infected with bias and prejudice. With the demonstration that all knowledge is grounded in narratives or myth of Lyotard declares that no philosophy – indeed, no knowledge – is untainted by prejudice or faith-commitments³⁴. This postmodern attitude is not hostile to a faith-committed thinking, therefore a favourable atmosphere to legitimate Christian faith and commitment. When we deal with faith, we have to acknowledge the fact that being a believer is to make oneself present to a reality which is entirely different from the realities like the world, ego or life. By accepting the presence of these realities life becomes an ongoing discovery of oneself and the surrounding world, a discovery that one is engaged in effecting. Thus life becomes a self-knowing and self-evincing affair³⁵. But in the case of making oneself present to a supernatural reality the givenness of datum and its implication as being-present to the subject is not clear as the objects of the world. In Christianity it is accepting the self-revelation of a God as love itself. Therefore the real question is making-oneself-present to the reality of God. Thus faith becomes the act of becoming present to the divine world. This making present can be considered as a vocation, because vocation is a kind of radical sensibility and orientation characterizing a person's life. Vocation is a mysterious and primordial consignment of oneself as a disposition or it is a being-for-the-sake-of. Therefore vocation as a chief orientation guide my every step in living. It is that grave and transcendental calling no one can fail to hear³⁶. Encountering with the vocation is not the same as encountering with the circumstance, the world. Relation with the world can become philosophy or science, it can be either *epistème* or *dóxa*. But one encounters his vocation as the most intimate center of himself, a kernel, that is, the incorruptible depths of a person. It is for the sake of which one has been born. It develops as a deep personal relation with God. In the opinion of Ortega Y Gasset vocation is not so much something that is imposed on us as it is a proposal presented to us. Hence it is a free necessity. It is a *creencias in which* we are *by which* we live irrespective of the pattern of the world.

³⁴ Cf. J.K.A. SMITH, «A little Story about Metanarratives: Lyotard, Religion, and Postmodernism Rivisited», in: M. B. PENNER (ed.), *Christianity and the Postmodern Turn: six views*, Michigan 2005, p. 134.

³⁵ Cf. A. RODRIGUEZ HUÉSCAR, *José Ortega Y Gasset's Mataphysical Innovation*, Trans. Jorge Garcia Gomez, New York 1995, p. 88.

³⁶ Cf. A. RODRIGUEZ HUÉSCAR, *José Ortega Y Gasset's*, p. 138.

Abstract. - Rather than trying to delineate what is meant by Christian identity in the postmodern world, the article is attempting to seek the very possibility of Christian faith and identity in this emerging culture. The root of this identity is traced by analyzing the concept of “*epistème*” and *dóxa* in the history of philosophy and science. “*Epistème*” as truth and certainty found its privileged place first in philosophy and later in science. When philosophy lost the privilege of being the throne of “*epistème*”, then science became synonym of knowledge. But with the postmodern turn the unquestioned objectivity of science is blamed of being biased and prejudiced. In this postmodern context being a Christian means having a set of core beliefs that determines the very being of a person helping him to have a personal relation with God who is the very basis of his existence. In this relation there is no why because it goes beyond any explanation. It is a state of being in relation.

Key words: Postmodern - Knowledge - Truth - Faith - Ineffability.