Agape and freedom: a Yannarian approach to education

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PHD

I, Nikolaos Koronaios, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that Christos Yannaras can be read as a thinker whose work contains a theory of education, which is profoundly political and Trinitarian. I explore his philosophy and theology, and I offer my own approach to his political thought. I focus on concepts such as “citizens”, “agape”, and “political liberty” which I consider to be particularly important for the educational view I present. Also, one of the aims of this thesis is to evaluate the educational approach that I discuss. For my assessment, I use the secondary literature. I suggest some ways in which this theory can be improved, and I argue that the Yannarian approach provides us with insights that are valuable for some contemporary discussions on education that focus on the notion of *agape*. To achieve my research aims, I bring Yannaras’ work into a fruitful dialogue with the work of various thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Martha Nussbaum, and some critical pedagogy scholars.

IMPACT STATEMENT

I think it is suitable for me to begin by identifying the potential impact of this thesis in the context of academia. This impact has to do with the studies that investigate Christos Yannaras’ thought. In some parts, my dissertation challenges some common readings of Yannaras’ work and proposes some alternatives. Yannaras is not always easy to read and understand. His long work involves ambiguities and, often, contradictions. This is why, up to a certain extent, this thesis offers some new insights that aim at

making some aspects of this body of work more accessible. Except for this, this dissertation suggests that, throughout Yannaras' work, one can trace a philosophical reflection on education that has escaped the attention of most scholars. My hope is that the step I take here to examine this unexplored area can serve as a starting point; a point from which more Yannarian scholars will depart so they may offer further insights into the topic. In this sense, I refer to two potential impacts regarding academia; on the one hand, I hope that the scholars who write on Yannaras' political and theological work will find my insights helpful, especially when they try to understand and write on complicated Yannarian notions such as "citizens" or "agape". Secondly, scholars who are interested in reading Yannaras as a philosopher of education, will encounter an analysis of what I take to be the most fundamental parts of his theoretical reflection. I am not arguing that this thesis is akin to a complete guide on Yannaras' educational thought. However, it can serve as a guide for someone who wishes to gain *some* knowledge about this area.

The potential impact of this thesis in non-academic environments is significantly different. The largest impact is in the field of education. I hope that my interpretation of Yannaras' philosophical reflection on education can assist education professionals (e.g. teachers, policy makers) who are interested in theological concepts such as "agape," in thinking about the connection between this concept and education. For instance, this thesis refers to the relation between *agape* and the political, as well as the relation between *agape* and critical thought. For some, education itself is inextricably linked to the political—and this view is often presented as a descriptive claim. For others, critical thought *must* be part of education, and this needs to be perceived as a normative position. I believe that education professionals who are interested in the concept of *agape* and who belong to any of these categories (or both), will encounter a

thought-provoking discussion about the connection among all these elements. Lastly, it is important to keep in mind that this dissertation is a philosophical position. Thus, it is a *theoretical* treatment. Another potential impact of this study is to inspire education practitioners to reflect on their practices or even to find ways to improve them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The production of this thesis would not have been possible without the guidance of my Supervisors, Professor Dr. Judith Suissa, Professor Dr. John Vorhaus, and Professor Dr. Paul Standish. Their patience, encouragement as well as their critical comments, have been crucial and precious. I am very grateful for these.

Since numerous other people offered me with substantial help and encouragement throughout my PhD years, I think it is important to include their names.

Dear

Iordanis, Vasiliki, Panagiotis, Giannis, Christina, Anastasia, Vasiliki, Christos, Spyros, Charalambos, Giorgos, Katerina, Charoula, Anthony, Effie, Andreas, Anthony, Daniel, Thanasis, Jack, Andreas, Nikos, Alan, Ioanna, Chrysostomos, Giannis, Evi, Konstantinos, Eleni, Giorgos, Isidoros, Loukas, Dimitris, Sotiris, Despoina, Ioannis, Nikos, Panagiotis, Nikos, Pavlos, Ioanna, Vasiliki, Tzenia, Christos, Olympia, Anastasios, Georgios, Tasos, Stella, Georgios, Nektarios, Melina, Stella, Nefeli, Maria, Athanasios, Artemios, Ismini, Giannis, Christina, Tasos, Maria, Giannis, Stavros

I thank you all, from the bottom of my heart.

God bless you all.

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT 3.5 (Open AI, https://chat.openai.com) to proofread parts of my thesis, to provide me with a list of synonyms for some words, to review some of my translations and to translate some terms.

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HISTORICAL AND INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

Christos Yannaras (1935-2024) was a Greek orthodox theologian, philosopher, and a public intellectual. He was a Professor of Philosophy in Panteion University of Athens and he has taught philosophy in various universities around Europe (such as in Paris, Lausanne, etc.). He was educated as a theologian at the University of Athens, trained as a philosopher at the University of Bonn and received a PhD in Philosophy from the Sorbonne-University of Paris IV (France) and another in theology from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece). He has been granted with honorary PhD degrees from the University of Athens (Greece), the University of Belgrade (Serbia), Holy Cross School (Boston), and the St. Vladimir's Seminary (New York).

He is a highly prolific author, having written more than 70 books in various fields such as theology, philosophy and political theory, and parts of his work have been translated into 10 languages (see in Petrà, 2019, p. VII). He has also written autobiographical works as well as articles in Greek newspapers since the 1960's. In fact, it is difficult to refer to each and every area that he has addressed with his work. In an attempt to say something that represents Yannaras, one could refer to him as an important representative of orthodox Christian personalism – a theological current which viewed both God and human beings as Persons.

However, for anyone not familiar with Yannaras' voluminous work, it will be useful to summarise a few notable features. One could say , therefore, that Yannaras suggested a certain definition and understanding of the term "Person." He principally offered this

interpretation in one of his major works, entitled “Person and Eros” (Yannaras, 2007b). Then, he used this understanding as the basis for other works where he explored questions such as: If the Person is such and such (that is, the way he has presented it in his major work), then; what account should we give of ethics, freedom, knowledge, politics, democracy, economy or science? How does western culture view Persons? Is there any meaning to the existence of the Person? All these questions, therefore, led to works in ontology (e.g. Yannaras; 2010; 2016;), epistemology (e.g. Yannaras, 2021a), ethics (Yannaras, 1984), political philosophy (e.g. Yannaras, 2006c, 2019), philosophy of religion (Yannaras, 2013) theology (e.g. Yannaras, 1977), political economy (1989a); and also to less academic-like works that showcase a more poetic language (2005b).

In order to be a bit more specific about what Yannaras has done throughout his voluminous work, I will pick only some of the topics he has dealt with and present them in a rather brief way. Therefore, I could say that he has worked on the question of the meaning of existence and Being (Ontology); (e.g. 2007b). He has worked on presenting a view about knowledge (epistemology) as well as the role of language in expressing one’s experience – he is largely inspired by Wittgenstein (e.g. Yannaras, 2021a). Having been deeply interested in the question of the truth and falsity of something, he has written on topics such as the critical evaluation of knowledge (2010); he has explored the question of the existence of God and the possibility of gaining knowledge about God (Yannaras, 2005a); he has explored the topic of the after-death salvation of the human being in Christianity (e.g. 2017c); he has argued that there are fundamental differences between Greek (Ancient, Byzantine) and Western culture, and he suggests that these differences can be traced through the field of philosophy (e.g. 2015b); he has argued against the phenomenon of religion (e.g. 2013); he has been critical both of capitalism and Marxism, although he has been quite sympathetic towards the

descriptions of humans as relational beings that one finds in early Marx (e.g. 2006c, p.170).

Yannaras has written a lot in philosophy. Also, as I pointed out, his official academic title was that of a Professor Emeritus of Philosophy. Despite these two facts, however, I think that Mitralexis is right to note that, in the English-speaking world, people "consider him a pure theologian rather than a philosopher, due to the vivid interest of the theological community for his work" (Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 90). In fact, his theological works have exerted an influence in modern orthodox Christian theology going far beyond the boundaries of modern Greece. This impact of his thought in theology is reflected in a significant amount of theological literature which has discussed Yannaras' work on an international scale – a process which begins during the 1970's, (e.g. Williams, 1972; Fuchs, 1972; Cousineau, 1972; Barbotin, 1974; Siegwalt, 1976) and still goes on in multiple forms – such as papers (Cole, 2019; Leśniewski, 2019; Skliris, 2019; etc.) or PhD theses (e.g. Gnau, 2005; Payne, 2006; Grigoropoulou, 2008). His theological ethics have been discussed by scholars like Demetrios Harper (2019) and Neil Messer (2019). One could safely add that Yannaras' work is also very controversial for theologians, since it received various criticisms (e.g Loudovikos, 2014) such as that which led Norman Russell[1] to argue that he "is nothing if not controversial" (Russell, 2013, as cited in Mitralexis 2019, p. 311).

The reason why I emphasise that these studies appeared in an international context and not only in Greece, is because the biggest part of Yannaras' voluminous work (theological, philosophical, political etc.) was originally written in Modern Greek. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, Yannaras never wrote in a language other than Greek,

[1] Norman Russell is a scholar to whom we owe many translations of Yannaras' works into English – including *Relational Ontology* (2011b) and *Person and Eros* (2007b).

German or French, and, still, Greek is the language in which the vast majority of his books, papers, newspaper articles, conference talks and interviews were written or delivered. In this sense, a scholar who does not speak Greek can only read those works that have been translated either into English (the "lingua franca" of academia in our days), or into one of the other 10 languages in which his works appear. This limited accessibility however is gradually widening as more English translations appear (see for instance Yannaras, 2021a).

In the 1980's, something which I would call a "turn" in the international study of Yannaras' work began very slowly to occur. This turn was, according to my reading, a focus towards the *philosophical* side of his oeuvre, that occurred alongside the ongoing study of his theology, which had already started in the 1970's, as I noted previously. Subsequently, given that a good part of my project belongs to this trajectory, that is, the literature that discusses Yannaras' *philosophical* work, I will turn to offer a brief overview of these philosophical studies. However, before I do that, it is important to add something else. The fact that, in this thesis, I will focus on Yannaras' philosophy does not mean that I will not deal with his theology. This is the case, especially because when it comes to Yannaras, it is almost impossible to separate the two domains entirely. One must certainly agree with Cole who argues that:

> Yannaras makes no real distinction in practice between philosophy and theology. His work is driven by a preoccupation with ontological questions, which for him as a Christian are also theological questions. There is a single, unified reality that both theology and philosophy investigate, using essentially the same methodology. (Cole, 2019, p. 300)

Cole's point is crucial for the scholars who aim to do justice to the most fundamental aspects of Yannaras' work. As I will also explain later, in this thesis I will refer to some of these aspects, aiming to show that they help us better understand Yannaras' reflection on education. Therefore, having made this comment about the fundamental link between philosophy and theology, I will proceed with what I term the philosophical "turn."

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE PHILOSOPHICAL "TURN"

As I will also show in the next section where I spell out my research aims, my own thesis has two aims: firstly, it argues that throughout Yannaras' work a certain theory of education is implied. Apart from this, my aim is to suggest some ways in which this theory can be improved, but also to show how this theory can contribute to some contemporary philosophical discussions about education. This means that I will follow a direction which is entirely different from the one that most people in the secondary literature have followed so far. To the best of my knowledge, no-one has presented Yannaras as a philosopher of education up to now, and this is important to emphasise before I proceed with the literature review more thoroughly.

To be sure, the fact that Yannaras' philosophy of education has received almost no attention at all, does not mean that Yannaras' work has not been associated with education. Sam Rocha is a philosopher of education who has used some of Yannaras' insights throughout his works. For instance, in his remarkable thesis on the concept of "Person", Rocha has briefly referred to Yannaras' *Person and Eros* (Rocha, 2010, p. 111). In another paper, Rocha has also borrowed Yannaras' conception of apophaticism (Rocha, 2016, p. 817), arguing that:

> We find the philosophy of education—and the entire field of education, for that matter—in need of a critical ontology, an ontology that has addressed and fundamentally questioned itself with a reflexive turn toward the existential (im)possibility of education: an apophatic (Yannaras, 2005) phenomenology of education. (Rocha, 2016, p. 817)

Moreover, Rocha co-authored an article with Adi Burton, where they offer a very concise discussion of how Yannaras' treats 'love' in one of his poetic works (*Variations on the Song of the Songs*) – a piece which I will also mention in my study (Rocha and Burton, 2017, p. 5). Yet, although Rocha uses some features of Yannaras' thought in his education discussions, he does not refer to Yannaras' educational views per se. In this sense, the gap that my thesis intends to cover remains.

This is not the first time I attempt to cover this gap. In my 2018 text that aimed at clarifying *some* ideas, I adopted a significantly different approach from the one I develop in this study. This text was very brief. It referred to certain aspects, such as Yannaras' criticism of education in Greece (2018, p. 168-170), the notion of "freedom" (ibid., pp. 171-173) found in Yannaras' *Recta Ratio and Social Practice* (Ορθός Λόγος και κοινωνική πρακτική, 2006c)[2], as well as the concept of "egocentrism" and its relation to this type of freedom (2018, p. 173). One difference is that, here, I take some new directions: Specifically, I discuss different dimensions of Yannaras' criticism of education in Greece. For instance, I offer a *historical* approach to the term "καταναλωτές [consumers]", but also I describe Yannaras' criticism against the type of

[2] From now on I will use the title "*Recta Ratio* and Social Practice" for this untranslated book. I borrow this particular translation from Miroljub Gligorić's study (2021, p. 281). Also, all passages quoted from this book are translated by me, except for one which was translated by Maria Filippou, to whom I am very grateful.

education established by the Greek dictatorship during the 1967-1974 period. Moreover, I shed light on some new concepts, such as the notion of "όραμα [orama, vision)" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 20) as well as the concept of "φροντιστηριοποιηθεῖ [shadowed]" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24).

Also, in this treatise, I revisit Yannaras' conception of freedom found in his *Recta Ratio and Social Practice* (Ορθός Λόγος και κοινωνική πρακτική, 2006c). Unlike my previous study, my aim here is to show why this type of freedom must be conceived as a *political form* of freedom. Engaging in a dialogue with other scholars who have written on Yannaras' political thought (Gligorić, 2021, p. 277; Petrà, 2019, p. 62; Gounopoulos, 2018, p. 77), I offer an alternative, detailed interpretation: I develop a view that connects political freedom with what I describe as Yannaras' Christian anarchism. Moreover, I link this type of freedom with some modern conceptions of autonomy, and I suggest some connections with notions such as "laws." Also, I argue that this political type of freedom must be connected with the notion of the Trinity, showing why some notions of Yannaras' ontology such as "activities" help us explain this kind of freedom in simple terms. A similar approach is followed with respect to the notion of "egocentrism." Unlike my previous study, where almost no clarification of the term was offered, in this thesis I suggest an entirely *theological* interpretation of this notion. I argue that one cannot conceive of Yannaras' concept properly without connecting it to certain theological ideas (such as "κένωση", *kenosis*). In my view, this new interpretation is significantly *broader* than the "secular" conception of the term that was implied in my previous text (see for instance, 2 p. 173). In other words, I attempt to *correct* myself, maintaining an open-minded attitude.

In my view, this attitude is necessary for any scholar who seeks to clarify and interpret the complicated work of this prolific continental philosopher. Like other continental

philosophers, Yannaras is certainly not an "easy-to-grasp" thinker. His way of writing is often inaccessible—which is probably why books such as his *Person and Eros* have been described as "dense, sporadic, and mystical" (Rocha, 2010, p. 111). Hence, as Yannarian scholars, I believe that we must always try to remain open-minded and revisit our old interpretations of the author's challenging insights, while keeping the dialogue with each other active.

Lastly, the most profound difference between this thesis and my previous study is that the study did not refer *at all* to the political and the Trinitarian dimensions of what I term the Yannarian approach to education. These two dimensions are probably the most central ones in this thesis. In other words, this text did not focus on *key* concepts of my treatise, such as the notion of "citizen" as an educational aim. Equally, this paper did not explore the notion of *agape* – another concept that occupies a lot of space in this doctoral thesis. Here, Yannarian *agape* is examined from both a political and a Trinitarian point of view, because according to my interpretation, both dimensions help us conceive of *agape's* relation to education. In simpler terms, my previous analysis was not a *political* analysis, whereas this thesis explores Yannaras' *politics* of education.

Especially in his public discussions about the Greek educational system, Yannaras mentions education quite a lot, often making significant claims through brief statements. For instance, in a newspaper article entitled "Παιδεία που ποδηγετεί στην ακοινωνησία" [Paideia that leads to the absence of communion][3] he writes that "το σχολείο [the school]" has a "κοινωνική – πολιτική δυναμική [socio-political power]" (Yannaras, 2021c, n.p.). Yet, Yannaras' often-expressed commitment to the idea of education has received almost no scholarly attention. His approach to education is, arguably, the most understudied area of his work, and this is particularly strange for a

[3] My translation from Greek.

philosopher who does not miss the chance to refer to the importance of education. The lack of this reflection affects the very way in which my literature review should be presented. More specifically, there is not an already existing discussion or an ongoing debate over the subject I am going to explore.

Based on my research, one must think of at least two reasons why Yannarian scholars have not written on his philosophy of education. The first has to do with the fact that the concept of education is not the first thing that comes to one's mind when one thinks about Yannaras' work. This is not only the case because Yannaras' name is usually linked to theology (e.g. Eastern Orthodox Personalism) but also because, despite his public references, Yannaras himself never wrote any systematic treatise on education (Koronaios, 2018, p. 165). The second reason is a more historical one; the study of Yannaras' philosophical work is, as I already pointed out in the previous section, a much more recent tendency in the literature, especially if one compares it to the study of his theological work. This means that there are many aspects that have not been addressed yet, despite the growing scholarly interest which goes hand in hand with the emerging, English translations of his work.

More particularly, in 1986, Yannaras' book, *Σχεδίασμα Εισαγωγής στη Φιλοσοφία* (1980) became the third Yannarian book translated from Greek into French.[4] This book can be viewed as a general introduction to philosophy. In fact, even though the French translation of the title of the book was "Philosophie sans rupture" (1986, "philosophy without rupture") and the English one "The schism in philosophy," (2015b) an exact translation from the original Greek title should be: "A sketch for an introduction to philosophy." The primary focus of this work is to introduce someone to the disciplines

[4] It followed *Χάιντεγκερ και Αεροπαγίτης* which appeared in French at 1971, as well as *H ελευθερία του ήθους which* appeared in French in 1982.

of epistemology and ontology. Yannaras does not follow a strict historical approach. Instead, he focuses on how what he conceives to be the most fundamental philosophical concepts (e.g logos, nature, language, rational knowledge, truth, Being), have been developed throughout time. He discusses thinkers ranging from the Ancients (e.g. Democritus) to Augustine, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Heidegger. Thus, in this book there is a largely subjective element, both with respect to the topics that are chosen (as in every historical introduction to philosophy, one might note) and to the way they are presented.

Based on my own research, the three reviews that this particular book received in 1987, (one by Simon Pierre, one by Gérard Siegwalt and one by Christian Duquoc—all written in French), need to be conceived as the first steps towards the international study of Yannaras' philosophical work. This year is when what I term the "turn" in the literature on Yannaras takes place: while his theology had been the object of scholarly analysis from the 70's already, people started discussing his philosophy too. Although analysing the reviews thoroughly is not among my aims here, it seems fair to point out that the reception of Yannaras' book varied. For instance, Duquoc's review was much more critical against some views exposed in Yannaras' work (e.g., 1987, p. 379), while Siegwalt's text (1987, pp. 329-330) and Simon Pierre's very brief piece (1987, pp. 310-311) remained more neutral, having a much more descriptive character.

This slow process of gradual, international discovery of Yannaras' philosophical work, became more apparent with the coming of the new century. In 2013, Yannaras' book *Relational Ontology* (2011b) received the International philosophical award "Filosofi lungo l'Oglio. Un libro per il presente" in Italy (Elia Zuppelli, 2013). Also, at both international conferences that were specifically dedicated to the study of Yannaras'

work (University of Oxford, 2013; University of Cambridge, 2017) his philosophical thought was among the central objects of discussion.

With respect to the secondary literature works, I should also note that, to the best of my knowledge, there have been four attempts at an introduction to Yannaras' work so far. Each of these studies summarises in its own way a long and (often) complex work, being very useful for the scholars who aim at taking a glimpse of it from a more holistic point of view. The first was the PhD thesis of Evangelia Grigoropoulou (2008) and, even though it was from a more theological point of view, it also discussed aspects of Yannaras' philosophy as well. Grigoropoulou mainly focused on some of the earlier works of Yannaras' (such as the books Χάιντεγγερ και Αεροπαγίτης (2006b), Η Ελευθερία του Ήθους (2011a)) (Grigoropoulou, 2008, p. 64; p. 125).[5]

The second and the third introduction referred particularly to Christos Yannaras' philosophy and were written by Sotiris Mitralexis in 2012 and 2014 respectively. In his first work, Mitralexis offered an introduction to some basic concepts of Yannaras' philosophy (such as "Person", and "critical ontology", pp. 37-39). In 2014, he offered another valuable and even more extensive presentation of Yannaras' philosophy by visiting other Yannarian concepts such as "activities" or "otherness," among others (Mitralexis, 2014b, p.103; p.105). The last work was Basilio Petrà's (2019) "Christos Yannaras: The Apophatic Horizon of Ontology", which was translated from Italian into English. In this book the author explored various other dimensions, delving into more Yannarian works.

With respect to the other studies, I think that it would be suitable for me to suggest a very basic classification; we have works that deal with Yannaras' ontology, works about

[5] All of them have been translated into English under the titles, 'On the absence and unknowability of God: Heidegger and the Areopagite.' (2005a); Freedom of Morality (1984).

his epistemology, and works that address his political thought. For instance, given that the concept of "eros" functions as an inseparable part of the Yannarian ontology, works that refer to this concept (e.g. Depraz, 2012; Depraz and Mauriac, 2011) can be classified under the ontological umbrella. The same could be noted about studies that refer to concepts such as Yannaras' "relational ontology" (e.g Mitralexis, 2014a); the concept of "mode" (Skliris, 2019).

When it comes to his epistemological work, most people have focused on his conception of "apophaticism" (e.g. Louth, 2019; Depraz, 2019; Dallmayr, 2019; Aguirre, 2019, etc.). Yannaras belongs to a group of 20th century philosophers who have been influenced by the work of one of the most famous apophatic theologians of Christianity, Dionysius the Areopagite. Among the scholars who refer to Yannaras' reception of Dionysius' apophaticism (e.g. Bamford, 2010, p.74; Tănase, 2014, p.260; Louth, 2019, p.16) some compare Yannaras' reception of Dionysius to Jean-Luc Marion's (e.g. Depraz, 2019; Isai, 2018); Marion is another representative of modern continental philosophy. As I will also briefly show in my project, apophaticism is one of the fundamental concepts of Yannaras' epistemological work, present in his political thought too.

The study of Yannaras' political thought is certainly a much more recent tendency in the literature (e.g. Payne, 2006; Gounopoulos, 2018; Mitralexis, 2019; Cole, 2019; Skliris, 2019; Gligorić, 2021; Smytsnyk, 2021). Especially if one compares it with Yannaras' ontology or epistemology, one will notice that it has not received the same amount of attention that has been paid to the other two areas. In my Methodology section I will discuss some of these studies further. For now, it suffices to point out that, although they do not refer to the idea of education, these works address some themes which I will also use in my analysis. For instance, some people refer to the idea of 'love'

(e.g Gounopoulos, 2018, p. 79) or the concept of "freedom" (Gligorić, 2021, p.277; Cole, 2019, p. 302; Petrà, 2019, p. 62). People like Cole have written on Yannaras' political trinitarianism (2021), an idea that will be present in my research too. Like other forms of political trinitarianism, Yannaras' political trinitarianism portrays the Trinity as a political model. As I will show in the methodology section, I am going to be in dialogue with at least some of these studies, adding my own insights where I think that this is required for the clarification of Yannaras' educational thought.

Therefore, since my own research aims at highlighting and critically reflecting on (what I take to be) Yannaras' philosophy of education, I believe that it must be classified among the studies that address Yannaras' philosophy. Having briefly presented the work that has been done so far in this area, the gap that my research intends to cover can be reformulated and understood in a much more specific context. While most people have written on Yannaras' ontology, epistemology and political thought after the "turn" that took place in 1980's, among the original contributions of my thesis is that it shows that Yannaras must be also conceived of as a philosopher of education. This will be clarified further in the next section, where I present my research goals.

RESEARCH AIMS

i. First Research Aim

As I noted, the first aim of my project is to make an original contribution to an emerging field of research by addressing an aspect of Yannaras' work which has received almost no attention from scholars who study his philosophical work. Basically,

I focus on what I would term as the "educational aspect" of Yannaras' philosophy. In this thesis, in addition to the term "aspect" I will also employ the terms "theory" or "approach." However, to prevent confusion among readers who are not familiar with the philosopher's thought, it is important to note that this theory or approach does not appear as a whole throughout his writings. In other words, although he mentions education in many of his writings, Yannaras himself never wrote any systematic analysis (treatise or paper) either to present a complete theory on education or even to deal with a philosophical problem regarding education (Koronaios, 2018, p. 165). Hence, this thesis contributes by constructing this whole from various smaller parts. As I pointed out, Yannaras himself never attempted to construct and present this whole. Instead, arguing that this whole can be derived from Yannaras' work is a job that I decide to do. In this sense, I make an a-posteriori claim: Firstly, I organise the material which I consider to be relevant. Then, I expose it in what I consider to be the most suitable order. And, after this, I claim that this must be conceived as the "Yannarian approach" to education. According to my argument, this approach has a political and a Trinitarian foundation.

ii. Second Research Aim

After contributing by presenting and clarifying Yannaras' educational thought, my aim is: a) to suggest some ways in which the Yannarian theory can be improved; as well as b) to show why this approach is important for some contemporary philosophical discussions on education. These two could be understood as two sub-aims that can be placed under the "critical assessment" umbrella. The second part of my thesis will be

devoted to these specific tasks. Before I present the Methodology section, I will offer a summary of the points that I will examine: (A) Firstly, I will evaluate what I consider to be Yannaras' notion of the "agapeic citizen." (B) Then, I will show how what I refer to as "the Yannarian link between *agape* and critical thought" can be significantly improved. (C) I will suggest a particular way of understanding *agape* and critical thought as educational aims. According to my argument, this interpretation will be valuable for the Yannarian approach. (D) I will suggest some ways in which (what I describe as) the Yannarian version of the "teacher" can be enhanced. (E) I will evaluate Yannaras' conception of the Trinitarian basis of *agape*.

METHODOLOGY

i. First Aim of My Thesis

It is not very common for philosophers to include a separate methodology section in their investigations. However, I think that it is necessary for me to offer at least a succinct description of *how* I am going to work to achieve my research goals. As I explained, the first aim of my research is to argue that, from Yannaras' work, one can draw an educational theory that has a political and a Trinitarian foundation. In this sense, one of the things that I will do in this thesis is to present this theory as a whole. Yet, *how* do I do that? My analysis combines two distinct themes: Firstly, it is based on Yannaras' comments on education in Greece. Secondly, it derives from Yannaras' broader philosophical commitments. In my view, shedding light on Yannaras' educational thought demands some discussion about other aspects of his work, such as his political thought, or rather his 'political theology' as a number of people in the literature like to call it (Cole, 2017, p. 62; Mitralexis, 2019, p. 315; Skliris, 2019, p.

332). In short, according to my argument, Yannaras' educational theory can be conceived as a synthesis between these two areas of his work. It is important to note that, in this thesis, I attempt an analysis but also an *interpretation* of many philosophical, theological and political commitments of Yannaras. In other words, I often suggest my own ways to conceive of the philosopher's insights.

When it comes to the secondary works, it is important to note that I employ two kinds of literature. Firstly, I use the literature that does not refer to Yannaras' work at all. For example, at some point, I defend the view that Yannaras must be read as a thinker who highly values the idea that students should find the courses taught in schools captivating. In order to offer a thorough analysis of this view, I turn to the work of people like Plato, Comenius, or R.K. Elliot. In my view, this type of literature helps us conceive of Yannaras' ideas better. I take a similar step when I analyse points such as Yannaras' political philosophy, and also other aspects of his thought.

Secondly, I employ the secondary works that focus on Yannaras' thought per se. Despite the absence of any thorough analysis on Yannaras' educational thought, the work that has been done so far to explain Yannaras' philosophy is going to be particularly helpful for my research. Given that in my analysis I will offer my own interpretation of many of Yannaras' insights, it is important to note that, in some cases, I will engage in a thorough and critical dialogue with at least some of these studies.

Especially when it comes to the explanation of Yannaras' political thought—which is going to be central to my work, I will engage in a critical dialogue with works (e.g. Gounopoulos, 2018) that belong to the emerging, secondary literature on Yannaras' political theory (e.g., Payne, 2006; Mitralexis, 2019; Cole, 2019; Skliris, 2019; Gligorić, 2021; Smytsnyk 2021). More specifically, in some cases, I will maintain a critical stance, offering my own insights or adding things that other scholars miss in

their analyses. It is important to keep in mind that, as I pointed in my Literature Review, the study of Yannaras' political thought is still in a fairly early stage. Hence, the fact that there are lots of things that remain unnoticed by the secondary literature is quite natural.

One example that illustrates my critical stance refers to the concept of *agape* – a central notion of this thesis. In Yannaras' case, *agape* is very closely related to politics. According to my interpretation, this link between *agape* and politics is present because of the Christian-anarchist, communitarian political philosophy that Yannaras develops. According to the view that I am going to defend, this particular version of *agape* does not leave education unaffected, because the Yannarian education has some *political* aims. In short, Yannaras often claims that the task of education must be to help humans become "πολίτες" (citizens, Yannaras, 2000, p. 24). From my point of view, understanding what Yannaras has in mind when he refers to the concept of "citizens," requires us to visit (at least) his political theory. And since, according to my interpretation, his political theory favors the creation of a community of people who love one another, aiming at imitating the *agapeic* life of the Holy Trinity, the very notion of *agape* should be understood as a virtue that a citizen should possess.

When it comes to the secondary literature, the idea that *agape* occupies a place in Yannaras' political theory remains uncontested. It is found both in sympathetic treatments of Yannaras' political thought (e,g. Gounopoulos, 2018) and in much more critical receptions (e.g. Atanas, 2016). Angelos Gounopoulos tells us that "if 'freedom of relationship' refers to a life of trust in God and love for each other inside the polis, then this experience sums up the political theology of Christos Yannaras" (Gounopoulos, 2018, p. 79). Slavov Atanas explains Yannaras' political thought by writing that "the true polis and politics […] need to be found on the 'power of love' and

the communion of people" (Atanas, 2016, p. 135). In simpler terms, one must assume that both authors agree that Yannaras envisions a type of *agapeic*[6] citizen.

How do I treat the notion of *agape*? Firstly, I believe that it would be a very serious methodological omission to ignore the studies mentioned above, just because they do not refer specifically to the Yannarian theory of education. According to my interpretation, the concept of the "agapeic" citizen connects Yannaras' political theory with his educational philosophy, because the author argues that education should produce *citizens* (2000, p. 24). Yet, this is not the end of the story. Particularly, I do not raise the example of *agape* to show simply that the secondary literature on Yannaras' work will serve as one of my methodological tools. The example of *agape* indicates that, sometimes in my thesis, I take a step further and engage in what I described as a *critical* dialogue with the secondary literature. This is important for the clarification of my methodology, since it refers to *how* I use my methodological tools (in which case, *how* I use the secondary literature on Yannaras).

More specifically, unlike Gounopoulos and Atanas, my own discussion of the Yannarian *agape* goes beyond the acknowledgment of the fact that Yannaras wants his citizens to be *agapists*. According to my interpretation, Yannaras' conception of *agape* presupposes a very specific link between this notion and the idea of critical thought, a link that the literature has not noticed so far. From my point of view, apart from his political thought, this link is significant for Yannaras' philosophy of education, too.

Hence, one must assume that, when it comes to the first aim of my thesis, there is a lot of my perspective in this research. First, it is me who suggests that there are certain aspects of Yannaras' work which help us conceive of his philosophy of education. Secondly, being in dialogue with the (limited) secondary literature on Yannaras' work,

[6] From now on, when I refer to the Yannarian "love", I will mostly use the term "*agape.*"

I do express my own views about the very way we should conceive of these aspects. Thirdly, the secondary literature studies that do not refer to Yannaras' work are, again, of my own choice; I choose them because I think they help us understand Yannaras' ideas better.

ii. Second Aim of My Thesis

While the first aim will occupy the first part of my thesis, the second part belongs to the second aim. In this part, my goal is to critically reflect on the theory presented in the previous part. As I already pointed out in my Research Aims, my evaluation will only focus on some aspects of this reflection. What remains to be clarified in this Methodology section is *how* I am going to proceed with my assessment.

The method I follow relies both on my own insights and on the use of the secondary literature as a tool for the assessment of Yannaras' ideas. In the exposition of the second research aim of my thesis, I identified five elements that I will discuss. In what remains, I will present *how* I am going to work in order to assess them:

(A) I will evaluate what I consider to be Yannaras' notion of the "agapeic citizen." ***How*:** By testing whether Yannaras' account of *agape* is precise and thorough. In my view, which I discuss, being precise and thorough in our *political* discussions about the concept of love is particularly important.

(B) I will show how what I refer to as "the Yannarian link between *agape* and critical thought" can be significantly improved. ***How*:** By exposing my own views about the link between *agape* and critical thought. In simpler terms, I will rethink this relationship.

(C) I will suggest a particular way of understanding *agape* and critical thought as educational aims. According to my argument, this interpretation will be valuable for the Yannarian approach. ***How:*** By using Martha Nussbaum's thoughts on education as a methodological tool. More particularly, I will show that Nussbaum's insights help us identify a certain connection between these two goals which is particularly important.

(D) I will suggest some ways in which (what I describe as) the Yannarian version of the "teacher" can be enhanced. ***How*:** By using Hannah Arendt's philosophy of education as a methodological tool. In my view, Arendt's understanding of love as well as the role of the teacher provide us with some insights that are valuable for my interpretation of the Yannarian teacher.

(E) I will evaluate Yannaras' conception of the Trinitarian basis of *agape*. ***How*:** By showing that it has something important to contribute to certain contemporary philosophical discussions on education. I will focus on critical pedagogy, a body of literature that very often connects *agape* and politics. According to the view that I will defend, Yannaras' trinitarian *agape* is valuable for the critical pedagogy discussions. To show this, I will firstly present the critical pedagogy literature on *agape*. Then, I will proceed by showing why I think that Yannaras' ideas are important.

iii. A Note on the Use of Classical Ontology as well as the term "education."

Apart from referring to the way I am going to work with respect to the two aims of my thesis, I think that there is a final methodological point which is necessary for me to

make. This note refers to a part of the philosophical vocabulary that this thesis will deal with in some cases.

According to my analysis, Yannaras' reflection on education is largely based on his wider philosophical and theological commitments. On the one hand, this entails that my research will refer to some concepts that remain at the core of many contemporary philosophical discussions. Countless philosophical studies on education, ethics, politics (the list goes on) refer to concepts that are part and parcel of the Yannarian terminology, such as "love." This is also precisely why Yannaras' work has been used in a few studies like these (e.g. in the literature review section I referred to Sam Rocha's educational study on the notion of 'Person' (2010, p. 111)).

On the other hand, Yannaras made extensive use of a philosophical vocabulary that, nowadays, many philosophers dismiss as problematic. For instance, as it is the case with other continental philosophers of his time, Yannaras uses the ontological vocabulary that one finds in many Ancient Greek philosophy works, but also throughout Orthodox theology treatises. This means that if someone wishes to understand Yannaras properly, one must take this vocabulary for granted. For instance, Yannaras' terminology contains the classical concepts of 'essence' and 'substance' – which is precisely why I will have to use them in this thesis too.

It is common knowledge in Orthodox Christian theology that the Church Fathers of early-Christianity, the first theologians, used a good part of the Ancient Greek philosophical vocabulary to describe their faith. Thus, while in fundamental works of classical ontology such as Aristotle's *Categories* one finds concepts such as "primary" or "secondary substances" (Aristotle, 1938, p. 19); in Orthodox theology texts such as John of Damascus' description of God (a 7th century scholar), we read that "wherefore, some of the divine names are said by negation and show His superessentiality, as when

He is called 'Insubstantial,' 'Timeless,' 'Without beginning,' 'Invisible'" (John of Damascus, 1999, p. 194). John of Damascus' treatment of the term "essence," here, must be conceived of as referring to what Aristotle would normally call a "secondary" substance; not *this* or *that* human being (e.g. Ben) but the idea of human being in general (essence).

The link between these two intellectual traditions is often stressed by Yannaras himself too (e.g. 1991 p. 26). Some may even detect a direct influence, and rightly so: For we know that Yannaras is an Orthodox Trinitarian theologian, like John of Damascus. We also know for a fact that he is a fervent admirer of Ancient Greek philosophy and, more particularly, of the work of Aristotle. Especially given these two intellectual sources, Yannaras' commitment to classical ontological concepts seems hardly surprising.

I believe that some readers of contemporary philosophy will understand the importance of the methodological note I intend to make here. More particularly, although contemporary Orthodox theology still uses some of these notions, one must not ignore that these concepts have been criticized from various standpoints by many philosophers. Very briefly, one could note that some common objections refer to the application of these notions to humans. For instance, some traditional perceptions of "essence" have been challenged from a feminist standpoint. One of the reasons is because they entail a rather controversial understanding of the idea of "woman." As Charlotte Witt puts it in her treatment of "essentialism":

> Anti-essentialist feminists reject the thesis of gender essentialism in both its forms. They deny that there are any properties that I have necessarily insofar as I am a woman. Or, to use the variant, they reject the existence of a generic Woman; there

> is no single, shared property or properties that must be satisfied in order to count as a woman. (1995, p. 322)

It is fair to point that a variety of scholars, such as anti-essentialist feminists, would react against some of Yannaras' assumptions. For instance, one could argue that the perception of the relation between "essence" and "properties" described by Witt is present in Yannaras' ontological works in various forms—not only when it comes to the concept of 'gender.'

Yet, what I think is particularly important for the Methodology section of this thesis, is the stance I am going to keep with respect to these concepts. More specifically, I must note that questioning Yannaras' (theological and philosophical) ontology is not going to be among the things that this dissertation will do. I am certainly aware of (and sometimes sympathetic towards) some of the contemporary philosophical reactions against classical ontology. Yet, here, I will take these concepts for granted. In simpler terms, this last note refers directly to the *assumptions* that this treatise is not going to challenge, which is precisely why I think that it is methodologically relevant.

Another comment which I think is necessary for the Methodology section relates to the way this thesis treats the term "education". Throughout his works Yannaras often uses the Greek term "παιδεία" (see for instance Yannaras, 2021c). In contemporary literature this concept often remains untranslated in English and usually comes across in its transliterated form, that is, as "Paideia". Some commentators of the ancient Greek literature describe *paideia* as "culture" (see for instance Jaeger, 1946, p. XVII), while the Platonic version of the term is certainly associated with the concept of "formation" ("…his *paideia*, his formation…" (Voegelin, 1966, p. 260)). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the notion has been linked to another important educational term which

stands for “formation” -- that is “Bildung”. Comparing the two terms, Gert Biesta points out:

> While paideia and *Bildung* both exemplify an interest in the formation of the person, the important difference between the two – and here lies a clear discontinuity between paideia and *Bildung* – lies in the fact that the orientation of paideia is that of cultivation – that is, the formation of the person in light of existing traditions and standards – whereas the orientation of *Bildung* is that of self-formation (‘Selbstgestaltung’) and thus ultimately of emancipation. (Biesta, 2019, p. 41)

To be sure, the term *paideia* can be also interpreted as “education” or, as Karina Martin Hogan puts it, *paideia* represents “a concept that encompasses education, enculturation, and character formation” (Hogan, 2017, p.1). When it comes to Yannaras’ work per se, however, I tend to think that the best way to translate the term “παιδεία” is not by finding refuge to the transliterated term “Paideia” (although I have used this term in a very few cases). In my view, the most suitable term here is “education.” The reason is that, as I show in this thesis, the philosopher raises issues that could be understood as being pertinent to things like schooling, curriculum, educational policy, moral education, the pedagogical relation, and also others. Certainly, the term *paideia* could work in *some* cases (see, for instance, my discussion about “egocentrism” in education in Chapters 1 and 4, where one would be justified to think that, in some ways, the discussion refers to a type of character formation). However, the English concept of “education” seems a bit more suitable to convey the meaning of the Yannarian “παιδεία”, since it remains a significantly less technical term than the notion of “*Paideia*”.

INTRODUCTION

To properly understand what I take to be Yannaras' approach to education, one should familiarise oneself with various parts of his thought. In this thesis, I explore exclusively what I consider to be the most central elements. Hence, in Chapter 1, I discuss the concept of "όραμα [*orama*, vision]" and the notion of "νόημα [*noema*, aim]". Yannaras refers to these two notions in texts that discuss the Greek educational system. Then, I focus on Yannaras' critique of the Greek public education system of the 1980's. This criticism is important for my work since, in my view, it provides us with some valuable details that help us reach broader conclusions about his educational thought. I argue that one of Yannaras' worries is that Greek education created "consumers" and "egocentric beings." Offering a historical interpretation of the notion of "consumers," as well thoroughly discussing the concept of "φροντιστηριοποιηθεῖ [shadowed]," I provide my own interpretation of Yannaras' insights: According to my approach, the philosopher warns his compatriots that, by focusing exclusively on aspects such as exams, they neglect other important educational aims. In other words, Yannaras calls for a profoundly different view on education.

In my interpretation, an important educational goal is the formation of non-"egocentric" humans. Yannaras' worry is that the Greek education of the 1980's does not focus on this crucial area at all. The first chapter concludes by summarising Yannaras' references to the goals of education: the creation of citizens, the development of critical thinking, the creation of captivating courses, and the formation of non-egocentric persons. This discussion is particularly relevant for my first research aim – which is to show that Yannaras' references to Greek education, as well as his broader

philosophical and theological ideas, help us reach some conclusions about his views on education.

To view what Yannaras' considers as the aims of education, one must delve into his philosophical and theological work. In other words, examining his references to Greek education is necessary but not sufficient. Hence, in Chapter 2, I start presenting, interpreting and critically reflecting on some concepts and some views that help us construct what I take to be the Yannarian approach to education. I analyse the notion of "Person" in Yannaras' work, explaining particular characteristics, such as the idea of "relation" and the notion of "otherness."

I then proceed by analysing what I term as "inner freedom" in Yannaras' work. This specific notion is particularly important because, in my interpretation, is very closely connected with the idea of "egocentrism" – a vice that the Yannarian education should stand against. In my view, the best way for us to conceive of this type of freedom is by situating it within Yannaras' broader theological commitments. Specifically, this notion must be understood as being closely related to the notion of *kenosis*. From this point of view, Persons are free in the inner sense of the term, when they entrust their lives to God, pursuing the will of God. God's will refers to various things such as love – which is why I suggest that *agape* is closely related to Yannaras' inner freedom. According to my interpretation, egocentrism refers to one's denial to be free in the interior sense of the term: the egocentric Person refuses to pursue the will of God because they prioritise their own will. For instance, departing from this conception of egocentrism, one can plausibly argue that the proud Person or the Person who does not love others (following God's will) is an egocentric Person. In contrast, when the Person exercises *agape* they are free in the *kenotic* sense of the term as I describe it.

Chapter 3 seeks to clarify Yannaras' political thought. This is particularly relevant for my analysis because it is related to the notion of "citizens"—a concept which is present in Yannaras' critique of Greek education, but also in the broader theory of education that I defend in this thesis. Given that, according to my argument, Yannaras' political theory constitutes a type of political Trinitarianism, I offer an analysis and interpretation of Yannaras' Trinitarian theology. I concentrate on Yannaras' metaphysics of *agape* – a notion that, according to Yannaras' Trinitarianism, is inextricably linked to the concept of "freedom." This freedom is metaphysical and Divine. However, according to my argument, this freedom must be linked with the political freedom present in Yannaras' political works. As I show, Yannaras' citizens must be conceived of as politically free citizens. Also, according to my argument, Yannaras' political philosophy is very close to anarchism. Hence, I propose that Yannaras must be read as a Christian anarchist political thinker. In my interpretation, his political theory promotes the creation of small, self-governed communities that aim at imitating the life of the Holy Trinity. In my view, this is precisely why Yannaras' theory can be conceived of as a form of political Trinitarianism.

To defend the claim that Yannaras is a Christian anarchist, I discuss the differences and similarities between Yannaras' work and that of different anarchist political thinkers (some of whom embrace the Christian teaching). These ideas are crucial in order to understand the notion of "citizen" properly. According to my interpretation of Yannaras' political philosophy, the citizens of Yannaras' communities strive to imitate the life of the Holy Trinity by applying agape to their relations. In other words, these citizens are free in the inner sense of the term: they are not egocentric. Also, according to my argument, these citizens are critical thinkers, since the type of self-sacrificial *agape* found in Yannaras' work is profoundly linked to critical thought. Hence, I also introduce

what I call the "Yannarian link between *agape* and critical thought." According to this view, *agape* is conceived as a process in the context of which Persons may have to act in a self-sacrificial manner. This is where critical thought should be brought into the discussion. Moreover, I add that these citizens are politically free subjects. Engaging in a dialogue with the secondary literature, I focus on concepts such as "activities," in order to offer my interpretation of Yannaras' political freedom. Moreover, I use some views on political freedom and autonomy that help us better understand Yannaras' insights. Then, I proceed by arguing that my interpretation of Yannaras' political freedom is valuable because it offers a link between political and Trinitarian freedom. In other words, Chapter 3 establishes the view that the Yannarian concept of "citizen" is grounded in a political theory that combines Trinitarian theology with anarchist politics. The Yannarian citizen is a Person who strives to attain different forms of freedom as well as a Person who is prepared to respond to the distinct demands of *agape* (e.g. critical thinking).

Chapter 4 has two goals. Firstly, it seeks to present what I consider to be Yannaras' philosophy of education. To construct this particular approach to education, I attempt to combine Yannaras' references to education in Greece with his broader philosophical and theological views. On the one hand, I show that his references to the notions of "citizens" and "egocentrism" imply that, throughout Yannaras' work, one can find alternatives. According to my argument, Yannaras' education must be conceived as being part of the Christian anarchist political community that I described in the previous stages of the thesis. This means that this type of education should aim at the formation of Persons who are agapists and who strive to attain inner freedom-- exercising agape is itself one way for these Persons to be free. Moreover, according to my argument, Yannarian education must aim to create future citizens of the Christian-anarchist

political community. This means that these Persons are going to be politically free and autonomous citizens. In my interpretation, the political freedom that these Persons will enjoy resembles the metaphysical freedom of the Trinity. In this political context, citizens are not compelled to do or be what they do not want to do or be. Hence, I suggest that both freedoms (inner and political) are significant. Moreover, I argue that according to the Yannarian approach, education must also aim to develop critical thinking. The second goal of chapter 4 is to analyse the last aim of education, which I call "captivating courses." This aim is presented in a separate section. According to my argument, despite Yannaras' substantial disagreement with Plato's metaphysics, his use of terms such as "eros" indicates that he can be read as a Platonist philosopher of education. From this point of view, the Greek philosopher is presented as an intellectual who thinks that, ideally, students must find their courses captivating. Before I turn to the second part of my thesis, I suggest that the work of philosophers like Plato, Comenius and R.K. Elliot help us conceive of Yannaras' position. For instance, I argue that Yannaras' Platonism echoes Comenius' insights because it presupposes that teachers play an important role in rendering the courses captivating.

In the Second part of my thesis, my aim is to suggest some ways in which what I described as Yannaras' approach to education can be improved. Apart from this, I highlight the valuable aspects of this particular approach. In Chapter 5 I refer to the importance of precision and thoroughness. Using the writings of Benito Mussolini and Maria Montessori, I argue that precision and thoroughness are very significant when we associate love with politics. Specifically, according to my position, precise and thorough descriptions of love are good because they help us evaluate whether certain political practices can be labeled as "loving" or not. Hence, given that Yannaras' philosophy of education refers to a loving citizen, I examine whether Yannaras'

description of love is precise and thorough or not. Moreover, I suggest that his view can be improved by Montessori's conception of love.

In Chapter 6 I suggest some ways in which what I called "the Yannarian link between *agape* and critical thought" can be improved. Firstly, drawing from the work of Ephraim of Arizona, I argue that the link between *agape* and critical thinking is significantly wider than the one that is implied in Yannaras' work. According to my reading, *agapists* must use their critical skills quite a lot. For instance, an *agapist* is sometimes required to find the most suitable ways to serve the needs of the beloved. I argue that this is a case where the *agapist* often has to think critically before they choose the most effective way to act.

In the same chapter, I employ Martha Nussbaum's work. According to my argument, Nussbaum's theory of patriotism can serve as a good methodological tool that helps us improve the "Yannarian link between *agape* and critical thought." Although one could argue that patriotic love and *agape* are different in many respects, I think that Nussbaum's view on how patriotism must be taught in schools is valuable for the Yannarian approach. According to my argument, Nussbaum's insights help us make an important connection: *agape* and critical thought are two educational goals that cannot and must not be treated as separate. Education that teaches agape must promote critical thinking. As I pointed out, according to my interpretation of Yannaras' work, *agape* requires critical thought. In my view, this suggests that the formation of the *agapist* citizen requires the cultivation of critical skills. The *agapist* citizen needs critical thought in order to practice *agape* more effectively.

In the next Chapter (7), I focus on the notion of the teacher. In my view, Yannaras' philosophical and theological commitments can lead us to draw particular conclusions about this specific concept. Apart from being an educator who is interested in teaching

captivating courses, I argue that Yannaras' teacher can be conceived as an *agapist.* However, in my view, there are some further features that this teacher must embody. A good way to show this is by visiting Hannah Arendt's philosophical reflection on education. As I argue, unlike Yannaras, Arendt is a political thinker who rejects any connection between love and politics. However, throughout her work, one finds a type of love that is related both to politics and to education. More particularly, according to some readings of Arendt's work, teachers must certainly exercise this type of love. The political theorist's account of love is closely related to the notion of "responsibility." According to the view that I defend, this notion is particularly valuable for the Yannarian perspective of the "teacher." In simpler terms, apart from being an *agapist,* the Yannarian teacher must be a teacher who cares about the Christian anarchist politics and holds themselves accountable for it.

In the next Chapter (8), I argue that Yannaras' conception of Trinitarian *agape* can contribute to some critical pedagogy discussions. The reason why I focus on critical pedagogy is that many representatives of this educational trend connect love with politics in their discussions. In this sense, I believe that many critical pedagogues would agree that love is valuable for citizens. According to my argument, many critical pedagogy theorists describe love (*agape* included) as a *motivation*. In my analysis, I begin by explaining the concept of "motivation," explaining why this concept applies to the idea of love. For instance, I show that some theorists connect this loving motivation with politics: From this perspective, love is described as a virtue that motivates individuals to act in a particular way—for instance, to fight against oppressive politics. After, I offer a brief presentation of critical pedagogy, explaining that, in my work, I will exclusively focus on its philosophical aspect. Then, I discuss the critical pedagogy theorists who describe love as a motivation. Since one of the most

central figures of critical pedagogy is Paulo Freire, I firstly analyse Freire's motivational *agape*. Then, I proceed with the work of other critical pedagogy theorists who have been influenced by Freire's insights. Like Freire, the critical pedagogy scholars I discuss often describe love as a motivation. In the final stage of my analysis, I argue that Yannaras' conception of Trinitarian agape can be valuable for critical pedagogy, because it helps us reconsider *agape* as a motivation.

FIRST PART

CHAPTER 1: FROM THE CRITICISM OF EDUCATION TO THE AIMS

i. *Orama* and the Junta

Throughout Yannaras' work one encounters the term "νόημα [*noema*]" in many instances. This noun stems from the Greek verb *voῶ* which bore multiple meanings throughout the history of the Greek language, given that *voῶ* is among those terms that Modern Greek preserved from Ancient Greek. One of the meanings of the verb is "to think." When it comes to philosophy, the noun "νόημα [*noema*]" has been used to make reference to various concepts. For instance, as Dan Zahavi's (2004, p. 47) detailed analysis of the concept shows, this notion is part of Edmund Husserl's phenomenological terminology. When it comes to Yannaras' work specifically, in some

cases "νόημα [*noema*]" needs to be translated as 'meaning'; specifically, it means "*αιτία* [cause]" and "*σκοπός* [purpose]" (see in Yannaras, 2016c, p. 18). In this chapter, I will stick to the way in which this term is used in relation to education.

More particularly, one finds this term in Yannaras' book *Παιδεία και Γλώσσα* [*Paideia* and Language] (2000).[7] This book is a collection of articles that Yannaras published from 1976 to 1997 and thus must not be conceived as a systematic investigation on education. In *Paideia*, the term "νόημα [*noema*]" (2000, p. 23) needs to be conceived more as an "aim" (Koronaios, 2018, p. 166). Yannaras employs it in a 1989 text in order to formulate his opposition to the aims set for the Greek educational system, during two different historical periods of Modern Greece (which I will present at a later stage).

The notion of "νόημα [*noema*, aim]" does not come alone in *Paideia.* In a 1977 text which is included in this book under the title "Η Μεγάλη Ιδέα της Παιδείας" [The Great Idea of Education] Yannaras introduces a slightly different term: this is "όραμα [*orama*, vision] (2000, p. 20).[8] It seems that, in Yannaras' perspective, *orama* (vision) can be conceived of as referring to something unrealisable. As he puts it; "Και με στόχο; Μα αυτή η μικρή λέξη είναι που φανερώνει κάθε φορά το ανέφικτο του οράματος" [With an aim too? But it is this little word [he means: 'aim'] that reveals the unattainable nature of the vision every time] (2000, p. 21). Hence, if I understand this correctly, Yannaras is a bit sceptical of the term "*orama* [vision]" for education – while he prefers the term "νόημα [aim]". However, in this specific text, it is also evident that the author does not reject the idea of a "vision" entirely. For example, referring to education in Greece, he wonders: "Is there room for us to start over again and re-construct the vision?" (ibid. p. 20). In my view, this "double" position of Yannaras', could be

[7] Since *Παιδεία και Γλώσσα* (*Paideia* and Language) has not been translated into English, both the title but also every quote that I will use from this work is going to be translated by me.

[8] From now on I will use the English terms "orama" and "vision."

interpreted as follows: According to the philosopher, some visions are acceptable, while others are not. For instance, according to my interpretation, one vision that Yannaras would reject is to be found in the next text of *Paideia,* entitled; "Ραχοκοκαλιά η Φιλοσοφία της Παιδείας" [Philosophy of Education as a Backbone]. There, Yannaras refers to a very particular, dark period of Modern Greek history.

In 1967, a group of far-right Colonels imposed a dictatorship in Greece which lasted until 1974, when democracy was finally reinstated. The predominant ideology imposed on the Greek society by the dictators is often described as "Helleno-Christianism" (e.g. Anastasakis, 1992, p. 183). The political vision of the dictators was to create a state based on what they conceived as properly Hellenic (Greek) and Christian values—here, I will focus on the Christian ones.

According to Yannaras, the Colonels were not the ones who first introduced "Helleno-Christianity." In fact, one could argue that there is a strong connection between this kind of Christian "theology" and a type of theology which was very popular in Greece during the first half of the 21st century. As some commentators of Yannaras' work remind us, Yannaras is extremely critical of "Zoë" (Mitralexis, 2019, p. 317) – which R. Richmond Raymer in his 1938 text describes as "an organization more or less monastic in character" (Raymer, 1938, p. 107). Raymer goes on to note that,

> The chief purpose of the Brotherhood has been from its inception that the members *should live* Christ in their lives, then that they should work for the awakening of the Christian life among their fellows. To this end their chief concerns are primarily preaching, then literary work, the office of confession, and catechetical instruction. (ibid., p. 107)

This movement gained much power and became very popular in Greece. As Grigoropoulou puts it: “The golden age, as it were, of Zoë began after 1929, the year of the death of Efsevios Mathiopoulos, when he was succeeded as head of the brotherhood by the archimandrite Seraphim Papakostas. Between then and 1954 Zoë experienced a radical development” (Grigoropoulou, 2008, p. 12). Yannaras himself was an active member of the movement until he left in 1964 (Mitralexis, 2019, p.317) and, in some of his later writings, he accused Zoë for various things. For instance, he includes it in the list of what he calls “extra-ecclesial groups” that “distorted” what he describes as “the dogmatic expression of the fundamentals of the Church’s experience [...]” (2006, p. 219). According to the author, these movements “were only interested in dogma as a source of moralistic teaching” (ibid., p. 219). In simpler terms, Yannaras can be described as someone who wants to establish that organisations like Zoë were too moralist to express the Orthodox Christian theology in an authentic manner, operating separately from the official Orthodox Church of the time (see for more in ibid., p. 217), which lacked the theological expertise to deal with them properly (ibid., p. 219).

What is interesting for my own study, however, is that Yannaras detects a link between Zoë and the Colonels. Certainly, it is of no coincidence that, throughout his work, he often reminds us that, when the Colonels took power, many Zoë members held ecclesiastical offices (e.g. Yannaras, 1988, p. 91). More particularly, however, Yannaras believes that Helleno-Christianism, the official ideology of the Colonels, had already been established by Zoë on a large scale. As he puts it;

> It appeared that the vision of the “New Greece” was suddenly revived some years later, during the Military Coup of the 21st April, 1967 […]. Indeed, during the first months of the dictatorship, one could get the impression that

> the regime was trying to derive its ideological basis from the "Zoë" movement. The same slogans about the "New", the "Christian" Greece were dominant […] (Yannaras, 1988, pp. 91-92).[9]

To be sure, education during the dictatorship could not remain unaffected by Helleno-Christianism. A historical example that illustrates this has to do with the aims of the Religion course in schools. According to a circular letter of the time, this course aimed at making every student "εν τω Δημοτικώ ακόμη Σχολείω 'δρων Χριστιανός'" [an 'active Christian' already from Primary School[10]] (A.N. 625/1972, as cited in Koutsoura, 2008, p. 173). In his *Paideia* text, Yannaras refers to the educational system established by the Dictators, by criticising its Christian origins. He argues that this system presupposed a version of Christianity which he calls "αφηρημένο δόγμα [abstract doctrine] (2000, p. 24). This type of Christianity, according to the Greek philosopher, was something like a code of conduct and a list of obligations (ibid., p. 24). It constituted a "γυμνό ιδεολόγημα [naked ideology]" (ibid., p. 24), being too far from the way in which Christianity must be understood. This *Paideia* text does not contain any thorough clarification of what the terms "abstract doctrine" and "naked ideology" stand for, and, thus, I will now turn to offer my explanation of these terms.

[9] My translation of the Greek text: "Το όραμα της «καινούργιας Ελλάδας» φάνηκε να ανασταίνεται ξαφνικά, μερικά χρόνια αργότερα, με το στρατιωτικό πραξικόπημα της 21ης πρώτης Απριλίου του 1967 (...) Πραγματικά, τους πρώτους μήνες της δικτατορίας είχε κανείς την εντύπωση πως το καθεστώς προσπαθούσε να αντλήσει την ιδεολογική του βάση από το κίνημα της «Ζωής». Κυριαρχούσαν τα ίδια συνθήματα για την «καινούργια», την «χριστιανική» Ελλάδα (...)"

[10] My translation.

In my view, both will help us conceive of at least one type of *orama* (vision) that Yannaras would reject.

Throughout Yannaras' political thought one will find a strong critique against ideology (Mitralexis, 2019, p. 326; Koronaios, 2018, p. 167). In Cole's terms (2018, p. 58); "Yannaras understands ideology as the interpretation of reality and organisation of communal life on an a priori basis, rather than the basis of the communally verified experience of the community" (2018, p. 58). This definition, reflecting different aspects of Yannaras' political philosophy (such as his support for direct democracy), describes ideology as detached from social "reality," (ibid., p. 58) and therefore, as an abstraction. One could argue that this understanding brings the notion close to the critique of Marx and Engels where, as per Martin's successful formulation, ideology is understood as "a generalisation of social relations; it is the ideal form of the actual relations, seen from the perspective of one position in this set of relations, but universalised, idealised and abstracted" (Martin, 2015, p. 18). This set of "organised beliefs at a high level of abstraction" (ibid., 2015, p. 17), which includes religion, is closely related to what Yannaras means when he talks about Christianity as "naked ideology." The Christianity of the Colonels was an ideal that did not reflect Christian experience as Yannaras conceives of it (2000, p. 24). To be sure, I would not go as far as to argue that Yannaras' account of abstraction is exactly the same as the Marxist one. However, his "naked ideology" notion is closer to the aforementioned critique, than to more classical understandings of ideology that seem to leave this abstraction out—e.g. ideology as "a verbal image of the good society and of the chief means of constructing such a society" (Downs, 1957, p. 96). Hence, one could argue that the Colonel's example involves a type of *orama* (vision) that, in Yannaras' terms, fails to seriously take experience into

account—in this case the Christian experience. According to my suggestion, this represents a kind of *orama* (vision) for education that Yannaras would happily reject.

However, it seems that there is another, important problem with this type of *orama* (vision). According to my interpretation, this is expressed by Yannaras' term "abstract doctrine." From my point of view, this term implies that an *orama* (vision) can very easily become a tool for a dogmatic and totalitarian leader – which is exactly what happened in the case of the Colonels. Its dogmatic nature is determined by the fact that it projects a certain interpretation of reality as exclusively true without dialogue, leading progressively to what Van Prooijen and Krouwel describe in more contemporary terms as "dogmatic intolerance" that is, the "tendency to reject, and consider as inferior, any ideological belief that differs from one's own" (Van Prooijen and M. Krouwel 2017, p. 292). However, although this idea of dogmatism is certainly related to what is at stake here, I suggest that there is more to be said.

In more systematic works of Yannaras, "dogmatism" is also taken beyond the aforementioned notion, in a way closer to what could be described as *oversimplification*. In Yannaras' *Post-Modern Metaphysics*, "dogmatism" is linked to what he calls "dogmatic codification" (2004, p. 39). I believe that one way to conceive of this is to think that it refers to the conversion of a certain (often complex) view into a dogma; a type of code (as the term "codification" suggests), a group of principles which allows this complex view to be converted into a "social reality" (ibid., p. 39). Here, the term "view" is quite broad: it can equally include philosophical interpretations of history, such as the Hegelian and the Marxist deterministic approaches, philosophical currents that aim at giving an answer to the question about the meaning of reality, but also religious narratives. According to my interpretation of the Yannarian "abstract

doctrine", in the Colonels' case, the authoritarian state was founded upon an oversimplified, doctrine-Christianity.

Contrary to this approach, after visiting Yannaras' works in ontology (such as his *Person and Eros*, 2007b), one sees that Christian theology is treated as a complex interpretation of reality that requires a philosophically rigorous investigation in order to be approached properly. Far from being reduced to a doctrine that somebody is called to accept, it is presented as an intellectual endeavour that involves rich and (often) complicated philosophical dimensions. At this point, I am not interested in analysing the role of Christianity in Yannaras' ontological work. Instead, I wish to argue that the term "αφηρημένο δόγμα [abstract doctrine]" (used by Yannaras in *Paideia*, 2000, p. 24) highlights two genuinely different approaches. Therefore, I suggest that this term should be also read as an *indirect* criticism of the oversimplification of Christianity. The idea that the Colonels rendered Christianity a "doctrine," means that they wanted to avoid intellectual complexities, because Christianity had to be easily convertible into a set of norms and principles. They needed a prescriptive guide that would shape their leadership, and consequently, their educational policy – not a complicated position which would require dialogue, time, and investigation.

One could argue that this is precisely why in another Circular letter of the time, an element of the "χριστιανικής πίστεως [Christian faith]" was too easily associated with a very particular teacher model; the type of teachers who are busy "ανατρέποντες τας σφαλεράς ιδέας των εχθρών του Έθνους κομμουνιστών" [refuting the false ideas of the Communists, the enemies of the Nation][11] (1389/26(17)/12-6-67; as cited in Koutsoura, 2008, p. 236). What is evident in this context is that Christian faith has been interpreted in a very oversimplified way so as to serve as a handy tool: Firstly, this Circular Letter

[11] My translation

presupposes that Christian faith is compatible with only one political ideology; the nationalist, authoritarian ideology of the Colonels. Any interpretation of Christianity that would link Christian faith with leftist or liberal democratic politics is not acceptable in this context. Indeed, one wonders: what would the Colonels' reaction be against someone who openly admits that they do not feel comfortable with any type of authoritarian regime, *especially because* they are Christians who even try to love their own enemies? Secondly, this *oversimplified* version of Christian faith served as an ideological weapon against the political opponents of the military regime: the left-wingers who were ruthlessly persecuted (exiled, imprisoned, etc.) by the authoritarian state. In short, according to my interpretation, an *orama* (vision) for education can also be conceived as an oversimplified version of a multi-dimensional, theoretical position, which a) eventually distorts this position; and b) can become a handy tool for an authoritarian leader.

So far, we have visited a small part of Yannaras' criticism against the Greek educational system of the Junta period. I also pointed out that the best way to understand Yannaras' ideas is to assume that he expresses some scepticism about the term "orama" (vision) while he values the notion of "νόημα [*noema*, aim]". According to my interpretation, the philosopher implies that some visions need to be viewed with caution. In the next sections, I will defend the view that, departing from his criticism of the Greek educational system, one can progressively reach the conclusion that Yannaras has some specific things in mind that the Greek education should aim at. The clarification of this view is going to begin by the exposition of some of Yannaras' complaints against the Greek educational system of the period after the Junta.

ii. Consumers, Citizens and Egocentrism

After the fall of the military Junta (1974), Greece switched back to democracy. In Modern Greek (public) terminology, this post-Junta period is usually called "μεταπολίτευση [*metapolitefsi]"* (Kassimeris, 2005, p. 745). The term has been translated into English as "regime change" (Tziovas, 2021, p. 1) but also as the transition from "one way of being involved in politics to another" (Kyriakopoulos, 2012, p. 19). Some people in Greece believe that *metapolitefsi* ended in 2009, the year when the global economic crisis hit Greece. Others refer to the year 2012, when the national elections showed that the two major opposing parties of the *metapolitefsi* period (Panhellenic Socialist Movement or PASOK, and the New Democracy or ND) had lost the popularity they enjoyed in the past (Prodromidou, 2018, p. 199). In any case, *metapolitefsi* itself must be conceived of as a period of major changes for Greece. For instance, the country joined the European Union (1981) and became a Euro-currency country (2001). Also, it was a period during which democracy no longer seemed to be under serious threat. PASOK (the Social Democratic party), and New Democracy (centre-right), took turns at leading the country. In the previous section, I pointed out that *Paideia* contains texts published from 1976 to 1997. For instance, I mentioned the fact the "νόημα [*noema*, aim]" is found in a text published in 1989. This means that Yannaras published the writings I discuss during the *metapolitefsi* period.

Open criticism against the demons of the democracy-free past was a common phenomenon during *metapolitefsi* in Greece. Hence, for some, Yannaras' criticism against the Junta's education could be easily understood as another manifestation of a popular tendency of the time. Yet, although one would not be entirely wrong to assume this, Yannaras' discussion of education reveals that he is not merely expressing his

aversion to the undemocratic government established by the Colonels. More importantly, I should make clear that, writing during *metapolitefsi*, Yannaras does not appear to be happy with the Greek educational system under the period of democracy either.

Some of his concerns refer to Greece's educational policy of the time. Take, for instance, the case of Evangelos Papanoutsos, a Greek philosopher and politician (1900-1982; political party: Enosi Kentrou- Nees Dynameis (EK-ND) which later became part of Enosi Dimokratikou Kentrou EDIK). Papanoutsos' work and ideas were crucial for the Greek education system (at least) during the early *metapolitefsi* period. Generally, Yannaras appears to be sympathetic towards this public figure. For instance, he classifies Papanoutsos among the *metapolitefsi* politicians of "κατάδηλη ανιδιοτέλεια [apparent selflessness]" (Yannaras, 2020).

Also, given that, apart from his political activity, Papanoutsos produced some philosophical works too, I believe that Yannaras would find some of his ideas fascinating. For instance, in his 1958 work, entitled *Φιλοσοφία και Παιδεία* (Philosophy and Paideia), Papanoutsos writes about the concept of "παιδαγωγική αγάπη [educational *agape*]" (my translation, Papanoutsos, 1958, p. 157). According to the philosopher, this notion contains elements such as "ο σεβασμός στην ελευθερία" [the respect of freedom] (my translation, Papanoutsos, 1958, p. 157). Later in the thesis, I will argue that Yannaras needs to be understood as a philosopher who would agree with this intersection between *agape* and freedom. Hence, although he would probably be sceptical of Papanoutsos' sources—the Greek philosopher derives mainly from the work of the Protestant pedagogue Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi—what I take to be Yannaras' approach resonates well with Papanoutsos' views. Yet, this is not the end of the story.

Papanoutsos' name is usually linked to some Educational Reforms regarding the Greek language. The first took place in 1964, that is, a few years *before* the Colonels' dictatorship. Papanoutsos has been called "the architect of the Papandreou reforms of 1964-65" (Kazamias, 1978, p. 23). One of the things established by the 4379/1964 law (Article 5) was that the *Dimotiki* version of the Greek language started to be taught in all educational stages (from primary school to lyceum or high school; see the law text in ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΚΥΒΕΡΝΗΣΕΩΣ, 1964, p. 896). Unlike the *Katharevousa* version, which Ernst Håkon Jahr and Peter Trudgill correctly describe as "a mixed, archaic form of language, full of hypercorrections and false archaisms" (Jahr and Trudgill, 1993, p. 90), the *Dimotiki* version, supported by people like Papanoutsos, can be described as "the ordinary, day-to-day language of the people" (Joseph, 2009, p. 465). After the fall of the dictatorship, a second reform followed, in 1976, by the minister of education G. Rallis (Kazamias, 1978, p.45). Unlike the 1964 reform, where the teaching of *Katharevousa* still had its place in the higher levels of education (ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΚΥΒΕΡΝΗΣΕΩΣ, 1964, p. 896), the 309 law passed in 1976, established the teaching of *Dimotiki* exclusively in all education levels (Article 2, ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΚΥΒΕΡΝΗΣΕΩΣ, 1976, p. 641). Although Papanoutsos was not a member of the party that implemented the 1976 reform (New Democracy) his name is often linked to this reform too, since, given his expertise, he acted as an advisor of the government on this matter (see the discussion in Kazamias, 1978 p. 23 but also 26).

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the Greek educationalist spoke in a rather enthusiastic tone about this reform, as one can infer from the Parliamentary Proceedings of the time. Specifically, he argued that Article 2 (which referred to *Dimotiki*) of the new law was of "Εξαιρετικά μεγάλη...ιστορική σημασία" [extremely great…historical importance] (my translation; Parliamentary proceedings, 1976, p. 4022). Yet, apart from

openly supporting this particular language reform, in his Parliamentary speech Papanoutsos calls for an additional language reform, which did not take place until the early 1980's: He called Greeks to get rid of certain accent signs («πνευμάτων» και των «πολλών τόνων), a change that would lead to the "απλούστευση του ορθογραφικού μας συστήματος" [simplification of our orthography system] (ibid., p. 4022)). He argued that these signs were not of any "φωνητικήν αξία [phonetic value]" (ibid., p. 4022) anymore and that the life of the Greeks would become a lot easier without them, since they would be able to write without worrying too much (ibid., p. 4022). Also, the Greek educationalist argues that, by this reform, more benefits would come for the Greeks, since "το βιβλίο θα γίνει φθηνότερο" [books will become cheaper] (ibid., p. 4023) – presumably because less accent signs would entail less ink spent in the printing process.

When it comes to Yannaras' view on the Greek language in education, it would be fair to point out that he is not entirely against Papanoutsos' second reform (1976). To be sure, as we read in his *Η Νεοελληνική ταυτότητα* (The Modern Greek Identity), he thinks that the *katharevousa* version of language is valuable too (see the interesting discussion with references to Cavafy and Papadiamantis in Yannaras, 1989b, p. 149). Yet, on the other hand he writes that the 1976 reform constitutes a "βήμα [step]" (ibid., p. 147) which is "μέγιστο [major]" (ibid., p. 147), but also that he does not blame those who feel "ανακούφιση [relief]" or "ενθουσιασμός [enthusiasm]" (ibid., p. 147) for this reform. When it comes to Papanoutsos' suggestion about the accent signs, however, it is safe to assume that Yannaras would fervently disagree. This is evident from his reaction against the PASOK law (1982) that brought into place what Papanoutsos (among others) called for during the 1970's. Referring to the new reform, Yannaras argues that the removal of the accent signs creates an insurmountable gap between the modern writing and the way in which the Greek language was written for "τριών

χιλιάδων (τουλάχιστον) χρόνων" [at least three thousand years] (Yannaras, 2022). This constitutes, according to the Greek philosopher, a huge "καταστροφής [disaster]" (ibid., 2022), since it disconnects modern Greece from its own historical past. In simpler terms, one could argue that Papanoutsos and Yannaras would disagree strongly in some matters of educational policy.

Apart from language, in his "Ραχοκοκαλιά η Φιλοσοφία της Παιδείας" (Philosophy of Education as a Backbone, from now on: *Paideia* text) the Greek philosopher raises another issue about the post-Junta education. He writes: "Τη "φιλοσοφία" του εκδημοκρατισμού δεν την καταλάβαμε ποτέ, γιατί κανείς δεν ασχολήθηκε να την οικοδομήσει" [We never understood the "philosophy" of the democratization [of education] because no-one bothered to construct it] (Yannaras, 2000, p. 23). I understand this phrase as follows: according to Yannaras, the fall of the Junta was not followed by a collective reflection on the new, post-Junta education in Greece. In my view, it seems that Yannaras expected something like a public discussion among Greeks about this very crucial topic. The old type of education, with its oversimplistic and totalitarian underpinnings, belonged to the past. In my view, Yannaras becomes more specific regarding this collective reflection that never took place. More particularly, Greeks should have come to an agreement about the very "νόημα" (*noema*) of post-Junta education (Yannaras, 2000, p. 23).

This lack of reflection on the "νόημα [*noema*]" is not the only problem that bothers Yannaras. More particularly his references to the notion of "νόημα [*noema*]" are accompanied by a fierce criticism against what he takes to be the practical, social outcomes, that the Greek education of the 1980's was likely to bring in the future. More particularly, he writes that education in Greece does not "ἑτοιμάζει [prepare]" humans

to become "πολίτες[12] [citizens]" but "καταναλωτές[13] [consumers]" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24). Secondly, he argues that the Greek educational system was creating "υπάρξεις με κτηνώδη εγωκεντρισμό, ασυγκίνητες και αδιάφορες για τον διπλανό τους άνθρωπο" [brutally egocentric beings, unmoved and indifferent to their neighbour] (ibid., p. 24).[14] Although in this particular Chapter I focus on the period of the 1980's in Greece, it is important to note that the same criticism against education in Greece is to be found in later Yannarian references that do *not* refer to the Greek 1980's (see for instance an analysis in Koronaios, 2018, pp. 169-170). Also, in a much more recent article published in 2017 by the newspaper *Kathimerini*, Yannaras complains that the "the Greek society, for 60 years now, does not send children to school"[15] for the right purposes; which would be for them to learn things such as "ελευθερία από το εγώ [freedom from ego]" (Yannaras, 2017b) In this sense, it is clear that Yannaras' worry goes way beyond the Greek 1980's. He believes that Greeks still fail to realise the importance of this educational goal, which he finds particularly problematic. Hence, as

[12] From now on I will use the English term "citizens."

[13] From now on I will use the English term "consumers."

[14]Throughout his work, Yannaras makes extensive use of the Greek term "εγωκεντρισμός" (egocentrism), along with other words that stem from this term. In his translation of one of Yannaras' books into English, Haralambos Ventis chooses terms such as "egocentric" (Yannaras, 2005 p. 99). The same notion is used by people who write on Yannaras' work in English (e.g. Smytsnyuk, 2021,14; p.106). Thus, given that the quote of the 1989 text which I discuss contains the term "εγωκεντρισμό" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24), I will also stick to this translation, instead of using notions such as "egoism." Also, throughout this thesis I will use the terms "egocentrism" and "egocentric."

[15] "(…) Η ελληνική κοινωνία, εξήντα χρόνια τώρα, δεν στέλνει τα παιδιά της στο σχολείο (…)". My translation from the Greek article "*Ελληνισμός με συνείδηση Σιγκαπούρης*." This applies to the other phrases of this article.

I pointed out, according to my reading of Yannaras, education must have a role in one's "άθλημα [endeavour]" (Yannaras, 2017b) against one's own egocentrism (see also in Koronaios, 2018, p. 171).

There are many things that must be clarified here. Before explaining Yannaras' rather severe accusations, however, I must provide a reminder. As I noted earlier in this chapter, *Paideia* is not a systematic, philosophical treatise and this should be kept in mind while we explain the points made in this book. For instance, the idea that the Greek education of the 1980's (the period discussed here) was leading humans to become "egocentric" beings is not a simple claim; it requires more than a few sentences to be adequately defended. Although Yannaras gives some reasons for adopting this view, there is no sufficient defence of this claim throughout the book. Personally, I take this to be a direct result of the fact that Yannaras did not aim at producing an academic work. Regardless of whether Yannaras' criticism of education in Greece during *metapolitefsi* is fair or not, there is a much more crucial element in this criticism that requires special attention.

According to the view that I will defend, the fact that Yannaras refers to notions such as "egocentric beings" or "citizens" must not go unnoticed by the scholar seeking to uncover his philosophy of education. As I will also show in the next sections, this specific part of *Paideia* assists us in reaching some specific conclusions about Yannaras' views on education. Specifically, I will argue that the concepts "egocentric beings" and "citizens" are necessary for someone who wants to understand the author's opinions about the aims of education. Hence, the two notions introduced here will be central to my analysis. Unlike "egocentric beings" and "citizens," in this thesis I will not focus so much on the idea of "consumers." However, I will only treat this concept in the very

next section, offering a brief interpretation of why this particular concept appears in Yannaras' text. Why does Yannaras refers to "consumers" in this context?

iii. Why Does He Refer to "Consumers"?

Yannaras uses the term "καταναλωτισμός [consumerism]" many times throughout his work (e.g. Yannaras, 2007a, n.p.). For instance, in 1989, the same year he published his *Paideia* text that I deal with, he also published a political economy book entitled "Το πραγματικό και το Φαντασιώδες στην πολιτική Οικονομία" [The Real and the Imaginary in Political Economy].[16] Influenced by economists such as J.K. Galbraith, the Greek philosopher defended the view that modern, mass consumerism is required for the preservation of the capitalist system of "παραγωγής [production]" (1989a, p. 104). According to Yannaras' analysis, "διαφήμιση [advertising]" (ibid., p. 104) has a crucial role to play in this context. Specifically, its goal is to mislead consumers, persuading them that the products produced are essential to their lives (ibid., p. 104-105) – an idea that appears to align with what other theorists call "manipulative advertising" (Aylsworth, 2022, p. 695).

Thus, one must note that Yannaras should be classified among these scholars who claim that "overconsumption is rooted in overproduction" (Pirgmaier, 2020, p. 277) and vice versa. Also, one could argue that his references to the notion of "διαφήμιση [advertising]" echo earlier approaches on the topic. For instance, one of the most explicit references (if not confessions) on the aims of advertising dates back to 1923. Edward Bernays, an important figure in American public relations, in his *Propaganda* admits that: "Mass production is profitable only if its rhythm can be maintained"

[16] The title of this untranslated work as well as the passages from the book are translated by me.

(Bernays, 1928, p. 63). The era when the "demand created the supply" (ibid., p. 63) was a thing of the past; Instead, "[...] to-day supply must actively seek to create its corresponding demand" (ibid., p. 63). According to Bernays, this meant that a "factory" in the early 20th century "cannot afford to wait until the public asks for its product; it must maintain constant touch, through advertising and propaganda, with the vast public in order to assure itself the continuous demand which alone will make its costly plant profitable" (ibid., p. 63).

Bernays, being Freud's reader (and his nephew), "capitalised on his uncle's theory, by becoming the first person to use, however misguidedly and opportunistically, Freud's ideas in mass manipulation and persuasion" (Nyamnjoh, F. B., 2018, p.19). He advised "corporations and politicians to invest in understanding the motivations of the human mind' (ibid., 2018, p. 19), and "emphasised the importance of applied psychological theory as an essential part of how corporations, and subsequently politicians, were going to appeal to their publics effectively" (ibid., 2018, p. 21). The fact that Bernays applied Freud's insights to the processes of promotion and sales must be understood in the economical context it belongs. More specifically, things were becoming increasingly harder, because "to make customers is the new problem" (Bernays, 1928, p. 63). This suggests that, unlike in the past, the demand in the 1920's in America had to be created by businesses themselves. Hence, according to Bernays' new theories, a businessman aspiring to become successful had to "understand not only his own business – the manufacture of a particular product – but also the structure, the personality, the prejudices, of a potentially universal public" (Bernays, 1928, p. 63).

To be sure, this new market reality did not escape the attention of philosophers. Some did not hesitate to question the moral status of certain market practices. For instance, critics such as Roger Crisp, who tells us that advertisements can target "the unconscious

desires of consumers" (Crisp, 1987, p. 413), have raised concerns regarding the autonomy of individuals (Crisp, 1987, p. 413). Yannaras himself must certainly be categorised among the thinkers who attempted to delve into this specific subject, although his own approach focused more on the character of the human being. For instance, the Greek philosopher argued that the society which encourages individuals to consume beyond their needs has a deep effect on the development of the modern personality (1989a, p. 105). More particularly, he contends that mass consumption has become the ultimate "στόχος [goal]" (ibid., p. 105) in the "βιοτῆς, [life]" (ibid., p. 105) of many people, influencing the way in which they understand their careers (ibid., p. 106) but also other aspects of social life, for example, "τέχνη [art]" (ibid., p. 106).

As per Zygmunt Bauman, "Everybody may be *cast* into the mode of consumer; everybody may *wish* to be a consumer and indulge in the opportunities which that mode of life holds. But not everybody can be a consumer. To desire is not enough" (Bauman, 1998/ 2005, p. 85). According to my understanding, Bauman's claim implies that one's budget plays a crucial role for one's ability to consume. For instance, we could add that one must be able to afford to respond to the calls of an advertisement. Buying a product requires money. In my view, Bauman's idea is relevant for a very specific reason; Yannaras' *Paideia* text emerged in the late 1980's, that is, during a crucial period within Modern Greek history. This means that, according to my analysis, one of the reasons why Yannaras refers to the notion of "consumers" in his *Paideia* text is fundamentally historical.

One must agree with Tziovas that, during 80's, funding from the European Union changed the social consciousness in Greece: "a desire to extract compensation for the poverty and material deprivation that followed World War II developed. Complaints

about state inefficiency were combined with an expectation that the state would provide jobs for life and handsome pensions" (Tziovas, 2021, p. 25). Zestanakis becomes even more specific by noting that in this period, the "consumption standards improved" (2016, p. 257). This also meant that "lower and middle class" families started to gain access to "expensive technological products (such as VCRs)", while in Athens, "expensive entertainment practices (e.g. going out to *bouzoukia* halls and drinking imported drinks, such as whisky)" were becoming well liked (ibid., p. 257). This kind of "conspicuous consumption" (ibid., p. 257), Zestanakis tells us, came in the decade of "the emergence of new media promoting 'lifestyle'" (ibid., p. 259). And he explains the term "lifestyle" writing that; "Lifestyle discourses […] promoted conspicuous consumption, sexual liberalization and increased participation in the growing economies of pleasure" (ibid., p. 259).

In other words, a possible interpretation of Yannaras' reference to the notion of "consumers" in *Paideia*, could be expressed as follows: Yannaras is a thinker who criticises modern consumerism. During this particular period (1980's), Greece began to change after years of social and political instability. Having fought in the Second World War and having been occupied (1941-1944); having gone through a bloody civil war (1946-1949) and an oppressive military Junta (1967-1974); the country started to embrace a social model that promoted images of prosperity and luxurious lifestyle. In the context of this model, markets were allowed to use morally problematic methods in order to produce the demands that they would later come to fulfill. One could even argue that, according to Yannaras, some of his compatriots started gradually becoming the type of human that the author criticised in his *Το πραγματικό και το φαντασιώδες στην Πολιτική Οικονομία* [The Real and the Imaginary in Political Economy]. As I noted earlier, in this political economy study, Yannaras argued that this market reality

can have a serious effect on the mentality of some humans, who eventually become obsessed with consumption.

As the secondary literature reminds us (Skliris, 2019, p. 339), during the 1980's Yannaras' work starts to slightly change its direction. This is when the author begins to reflect on the work of Karl Marx, but also on the works of Marxist thinkers such as Marcuse, Horkheimer, Adorno, Habermas and others. Hence, it might be tempting for the Yannarian scholar to think that when it comes to *Paideia*, behind Yannaras' reference to notions such as "consumers", a kind of neo-Marxist view on education is implied. From this standpoint, Yannaras would probably look like another Marxist thinker of education who writes immediately after the 1970's—the decade when some very influential (yet controversial) Marxist analyses on education appeared (such as Bowles and Gintis' "Schooling in Capitalist America" which was published in 1976; see Bowles and Gintis, 2011).

Personally, I would not go as far as to argue that Yannaras desires to offer a neo-Marxist critique of the Greek educational system in his *Paideia*. The best way for us to understand the view that education in the 1980's in Greece did not "ἑτοιμάζει [prepare]" humans to become "πολίτες [citizens]" but "καταναλωτές [consumers]" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24), is to think that this opinion originates from Yannaras' own observation of the Greek society during the 1980's. Departing from a very similar distinction (not exactly the one found in *Paideia*), in my previous work I argued that the notion of "consumers" referred to the future of the students themselves, showing that it is linked to a very specific Yannarian view on education (Koronaios, 2018, p. 168-169). However, in this section, I wish to present a significantly different, *historical* argument, that focuses a lot on how this notion fits into the Greek 1980's. This is precisely why I

have offered, a) this brief overview of Yannaras' broader views on "consumerism," as well as b) this concise reference to part of the Greek history of the 1980's.

According to this new approach, Yannaras used the term "consumers" not only because he wanted to refer to the future of students, but because he wanted to refer to adults themselves. In my view, when he writes that education does "ἑτοιμάζει [prepare]" humans to become "πολίτες [citizens]" but "καταναλωτές [consumers]" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24) he makes a *historical* claim; he invites his *adult* readers of the time (1980's) to think that there is something fundamentally wrong about the social model that the Greek society had started to embrace. According to my interpretation, behind the use of the term "consumers," one detects the image of an intellectual who worries about his country and who wants to communicate his worries. Hence, the term "consumers" does not simply refer to the future of students; it can be also read as an indirect call for collective self-criticism. I suggest that, by this reference, Yannaras wants to remind his compatriots that this historical phase of Greece (1980's) was fundamentally problematic, because Greek citizens had allowed a Western-style consumerist society to emerge. In other words, in this section I argue that the term "consumers" needs to be understood from an entirely *historical* point of view.

So far I have shown that the author complains that the Greek educational system of the *metapolitefsi* period created "egocentric beings": "consumers" and not "citizens." In the next sections, I will briefly refer to the notion of "egocentric beings" in an educational context. As I will point out, in the *Paideia* text, this notion is linked to the notion of "shadowing." Hence, I will firstly explain what the notion of "shadowing" stands for, and then I will show why this concept allows us to reach some conclusions about Yannaras' concept of "egocentric beings" in education.

iv. Education Has Been "φροντιστηριοποιηθεῖ"

What does Yannaras mean when he writes that the *metapolitefsi* education produced "egocentric beings"? In my view, one should begin by a very specific term that Yannaras introduces in this particular text, which is the verb "φροντιστηριοποιηθεῖ." (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24). The origin of this very uncommon term is the noun "φροντιστήριο." One of the most successful translations of this word is "shadow education school" (Giavrimis et. al, 2018, p. 72). Shadow education schools are private. They usually open during the afternoon hours of the school day, and they remain open during weekends. Their chief goal is to help students who attend public schools to improve and succeed in their exams.

One example that is relevant for my discussion, is that lots of high school (Lyceum) students attend shadow education schools to secure a place in public university. The transition from high school to the public university demands success in the "Panhellenic" exams. These exams are required by all universities in Greece and their oldest predecessor is detected in 1964, when, according to the National Exams Organisation (2016, p.7), it was the first time that an exam was essential for all Institutions (see the "Β.Δ. 378/1964, ΦΕΚ 111" law in ibid., p. 7). Since then, these exams have changed in many ways. Public universities in Greece are free of charge for undergraduates and accept a limited number of new students each year, mainly based on their Panhellenic exam grades. The Panhellenic exams are organised by the Greek Ministry of Education ('Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports') and every high school student has the right to take them. When it comes to the subjects examined, these are part of the high school curriculum. In an ideal world, this would mean that

attending school and working hard are enough for a student to prepare for these exams. However, the reality is different, at least according to how many Greeks see it.

Giavrimis and his colleagues (2018) offer a very helpful summary of some studies on shadow education in Greece. Among them, there are some that refer directly to the student's "entry to higher education" (Giavrimis et. al, 2018 p. 73). For instance, in a study conducted in 2000 (Psacharopoulos and Papakonstantinou, 2005, as cited in Giavrimis et. al, 2018, p. 73), "in about 3,500 first-year university Greek students, it was noted that over 80% of these students had attended shadow education schools for their entry to higher education, 50% had attended private lessons, while one student out of three had paid for both forms of shadow education" (ibid., p. 73). Also, myself having lived and received education in Greece, I could not agree more with Maria Polychronaki who writes that shadow education schools are part of the Greek "συνείδηση [mentality]"[17] (Polychronaki, 2006, n.p.). The sad reality is that the shadow education schools are generally viewed as a preferable alternative to public ones, especially when it comes to exam preparation (e.g. the Panhellenic exams). In short, many Greeks do not rely on the public schooling system when their post-school future is at stake.

When it comes to the *Paideia* text I discuss here, one must note that it is not exactly shadow education schools that Yannaras attacks. As I pointed out, he uses the (rather strange) verb "φροντιστηριοποιηθεῖ [shadowed]"[18] (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24), a term that shares the same etymology with the Greek noun "φροντιστήριο", that signifies "shadow education school." Despite this etymological relation, however, one must think that the Yannarian concept refers to the public education itself. Hence, in my view, the verb suggests that it is the public education that has been "shadowed." More specifically, I

[17] My translation
[18] My translation. From now on I will use this English term for my discussion.

believe that, for Yannaras, the popularity of shadow education schools are merely the symptom of a social "disease" from which the Greek society suffered during the *metapolitefsi* period. The "disease" is nothing more than the very *shadowing* of public education.

To clarify this particular concept, it is essential to see that Yannaras refers to the way in which Greeks understood the aims of Greek public education. More particularly, by using this notion, I believe that he wants to describe a very specific educational model. Hence, this is related to the main *noema* [aim] of education in Greece. I suggest that Yannaras' idea that public education had been "shadowed" can be interpreted as follows: the aims of public education echoed the aims set by an afternoon, shadow education school. In other words, according to my interpretation, we must *not* ignore this particular, etymological relation. From this point of view, the shadow education school can be understood as a school which is largely interested in directing the attention of students towards exam success and helping them achieve it. Hence, I suggest that a possible way to interpret the notion of "shadowed" is by connecting it to the very notion of "exams." From my point of view, Yannaras tries to describe an entirely human-oriented concept; this means that the *shadowing* of education refers to an idea existing *inside* the minds of his compatriots. We must, therefore, think that it represents a common view shared by many people (presumably teachers, students, parents, the list goes on…) in Greece during the 1980's. According to my interpretation of Yannaras, education has been subject to *shadowing*, in the sense that it was the Greeks who used to *think* about it as being predominantly about exam preparation. In other words, Yannaras' notion of "shadowed" is linked to a part of what Emile Durkheim would probably describe by the term "collective conscience" – which refers to "the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same

society" (Durkheim, 1960, p. 79). We must, therefore, assume that by publishing this specific text in this particular historical period, Yannaras tries to direct the reader's attention towards a popular idea about the very aims of education, an idea which he finds problematic. Far from being a philosophical investigation, his *Paideia* text can be conceived as a call towards his fellow compatriots. What he really wants is to urge them not to rely on an uncritical optimism about what followed the oppressive, ideological education of the military Junta. The new democratic era of the 1980's brought some new educational problems.

In my previous attempt to explore/explain? some similar ideas, I did not refer to the notion of "shadowing" at all, although I did refer to concepts such as "certifications, diplomas etc." (2018, p. 169). If one combines the analysis presented in this paper with the interpretation of the notion of "shadowing" discussed here, one could argue that one of the reasons why Greeks were so preoccupied with exam-success was because this success can be understood as a step towards a lucrative career (see for more in Koronaios, 2018, p. 168 but also p. 169; see also Yannaras' reference to the idea of "σταθερό εισόδημα [regular income]," 2000, p. 24). However, instead of trying to explore the possible connections and answer *why* Yannaras thinks that the Greeks were so focused on exams, I wish to take an entirely different step. In the next section, I will argue that the notion of "shadowing" helps us conceive of Yannaras' references to "egocentric" beings, which is going to be central to this thesis.

v. From the "Shadowing" of Education to "Egocentric Beings"

As I noted, one of Yannaras' worries is that the Greek education of the 1980's created humans who are "egocentric." Yet, what does this mean? Why does the author use this term? A very few lines after his reference to the "shadowing of education" the

Greek philosopher refers to the content of some primary school textbooks from that period. According to his argument, throughout these textbooks there is no single reference to notions such as "benefaction", the idea of "humans helping each other" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24), or "κοινωνική φιλαλληλία [altruism]" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24). In a rather sarcastic tone, Yannaras writes that these books assume that it is exclusively the "state" (ibid., p. 24) that must look after "the weak, the poor and the suffering" (ibid., p. 24). Hence, his polemic leads to the conclusion that: "We prepare [through education] brutally egocentric beings, unmoved and indifferent to their fellow human beings […]"[19] (ibid., p. 24).

According to my interpretation, these views are inextricably linked to the notion of the "shadowing" of education. Specifically, I suggest that in this specific segment of *Paideia,* Yannaras attempts to make the following points: many of his compatriots (presumably parents, teachers, or others) understood education mainly as being about exams. Yet, how should we understand the assertion that this type of education promoted the formation of "egocentric beings"? What kind of concerns does this phrase convey?

Although I do acknowledge that this is not an easy question, according to my interpretation, there is at least one way to make sense of Yannaras' view. I, therefore, suggest that Yannaras wants to say to his compatriots that, by thinking about education in the way they do, they run the risk of neglecting what he considers as a very important educational aim. In his perspective, part of what education should aim for is to deter students from becoming trapped in the net of egocentrism (Koronaios, 2018, pp. 169-170, but also p. 174). Hence, we must not attempt to understand this discussion without

[19] "Ετοιμάζουμε υπάρξεις με κτηνώδη εγωκεντρισμό, ασυγκίνητες και αδιάφορες για τον διπλανό τους άνθρωπο" My translation from Greek.

taking into account the normative claim about the aims of education that accompany it. In my view, the notion of "shadowing" suggests that Yannaras calls Greeks to take the time to think that obsession about exams is dangerous, because it prevents us from concentrating on the crucial stuff. When we are overly pre-occupied with exams, we are likely to fail at asking important questions, such as: In what ways can we avoid the emergence of "egocentric beings"? In other words, raising the issue of the primary school textbooks that lack any reference to altruistic (loving) practices serves a specific purpose. I believe that what Yannaras wants to say to his fellow compatriots is that the popular view about the aims of education is overly narrow and one-dimensional. In short, from my point of view, there is a very specific reason why Yannaras employs what he called a "ανατριχιαστικό παράδειγμα [shuddering example]" (2000, p. 24) – that is, the absence of any reference to altruistic (loving) practices, which itself entails that the problem of "egocentric beings" is put to the side. According to my interpretation, the reason is once again that he wants to resist the way in which his fellow compatriots understand education. He implies that by focusing on exams they miss other important aims.

According to my view, Yannaras' point is not entirely problem-free. For instance, the fact that some primary school textbooks do not refer to altruistic (loving) practices can hardly justify the large assertion that education creates "egocentric beings." Perhaps, some may claim that Yannaras offers a small example that opens the view to a larger phenomenon. However, this is another broad claim in itself—a claim that requires a thorough analysis and a detailed argument. Despite its weaknesses, however, this specific part of Yannaras' text is going to be particularly important both for this chapter and for a good part of the thesis. At this specific point, Yannaras takes a very interesting step, because he does not simply criticise what he takes to be a popular view. In my

opinion, this is the second time in his 1989 text, where the author implies that there are specific goals that education should attempt to reach. The first time was when he wrote that education creates "consumers" and not "citizens" (2000, p. 24). In the next section, therefore, I will start discussing what I take to be Yannaras' view about the aims of education. From this point onwards, the ground will be ready for me to proceed with what I consider to be Yannaras' philosophy of education.

vi. The Aims of Education; Citizens, Non-Egocentric Beings, Critical Thought, Captivating Courses

The discussion about the aims of education has a long history. For instance, when classical figures like Plato or Rousseau referred to education, they certainly had in mind at least some aims for their educational theories. To be sure, this question keeps philosophers of education busy to this day. Aiming to show the significance of the topic, John White argues that "not only teachers and parents may have a responsibility to reflect on what the aims of education should be: every citizen has an interest in this" (White, 2010, p. 1). White is known for having made another point that highlights the value of the subject: "'What should our society be like?' is a question which as a citizen he cannot avoid. It overlaps so much with the question about education that the two cannot sensibly be kept apart" (White, 2010, p. 1). Apart from being significant, this topic is also very rich, and thus particularly challenging to deal with. For instance, I think that Paul Standish helps us a lot to think about its complexity when he observes that "over-arching or supposedly ultimate aims are to be viewed with caution, as these may exert a limitation on the "freeing activity" which education should incorporate" (Standish, 1999, p. 42).

In my reading, Yannaras needs to be understood as a thinker who does not remain neutral when it comes to this topic. As I already mentioned in the previous sections of this chapter, I believe that this is evident from his criticism of education in Greece during the 1980's. More particularly, from the things I discussed in the previous sections, I will single out two features, the analysis of which will occupy a good part of my thesis. The first is the idea that Yannaras complains that the Greek education of the 1980's does not create "πολίτες [citizens]" (2000, p. 24). The second departs from his reference to the notion of "egocentric beings" (ibid., p. 24). According to my argument, both are significant for someone to understand Yannaras' view on the aims of education.

In my view, the fact that he complains that the Greek education of the 1980's does not "prepare" (ibid., p. 24) students to become "citizens" means that, in Yannaras' perspective, one of the aims of the Greek education of the 1980's must be to create "citizens." Here, one should add that this educational aim comes back in many of his later texts that refer to education. For instance, in 2012, Yannaras published a newspaper article which can be read as a fierce polemic against the Greek political system. There, he writes that the Greek "σχολείο [school]" keeps producing "ψηφοφόρους που δεν έμαθαν ποτέ να κρίνουν, να αξιολογούν" [voters who never learned how to judge, to assess], instead of creating "πολίτες [citizens]" (2012, n.p.).[20] In simpler terms, the fact that concept of "citizen" is used again and again, entails that it must be a particularly important educational aim for Yannaras.

Also, the fact that he wants to raise awareness among his compatriots about the idea of "egocentric beings" suggests something similar. As I noted, the argument he offers is not very strong; indeed, the fact that some primary school textbooks did not include any reference to things such as altruistic deeds, is not enough to justify the (rather

[20] My translation from Greek

simplistic) claim that the Greek education of the 1980's creates "egocentric beings." Yet, in my view, this point indicates that, in Yannaras' perspective, preventing humans from becoming "egocentric beings" should be understood as having some relation to the aims of the Greek education of the 1980's (for a similar view that does not refer to this particular historical period see Koronaios, 2018, p. 174).

According to my research, apart from these two, one should infer that there are at least two further things that Yannaras links to the idea of aims. The first aim I will refer to as "captivating courses." For the clarification of this aim I will devote a whole chapter of my dissertation, and thus I will not mention it here. It suffices to point out that the discussion of this aim is going to take place *after* the extensive analysis of the other terms (i.e. "egocentric beings" and "citizens"). Now, when it comes to the other aim, things are a bit different. Firstly, I must note that this aim has to do with the development of "critical thought." Also, although I will not analyse it thoroughly, I will briefly refer to this aim in the second part of my thesis, where I assess what I take to be Yannaras' philosophy of education. Therefore, this means that it is important to give a concise description of it, before I turn to the next chapter.

Yannaras expresses his view about this aim in an interview found in the Antifonitis [Ἀντιφωνητὴς] newspaper (Antifonitis, 2006a, p. 7). The philosopher replies that one of the things that the Greek school should aim, is the development of "κριτική σκέψη[21] [critical thought]" (ibid., 2006a, p. 7). He argues that "σήμερα [nowadays]," it is so easy for a student to have access to the piece of "πληροφορία [information]" they want. They simply need a computer to do it. This easy access, according to Yannaras, affects the role that education should play. More specifically, one of its aims must be to teach

[21] All passages from this interview are translated by me.

students how to “θὰ κρίνει τὴν πληροφορία” [assess the piece of information] but also how to “ἀξιοποιήσει” [make good use of] it (ibid., 2006a, p. 7).

By this comment, Yannaras seems to side with many other voices who remind us of the significance of critical thought for such contexts (see for instance a nice discussion of the topic in Pachtman, 2012, p. 39). Perhaps his idea could be better described through concepts such as “critical online reasoning,” (Molerov et al., 2020, p. 7). By this notion Molerov and colleagues refer to

> the personal abilities of searching, selecting, accessing, processing, and using online information to solve a given problem or build knowledge while critically distinguishing trustworthy from untrustworthy information and reasoning argumentatively based on trustworthy and relevant information from the online environment. (Molerov et al., 2020, p. 7)

Notice that Molerov and colleagues’ “working construct definition” (ibid., p. 7) refers both to the evaluation of information and the use of this information (“using” ibid., p. 7). This is precisely why it seems to me that Yannaras would happily apply this notion to his discussions about education. Before I turn to the next chapter, I must note that in this specific interview, Yannaras raises a rather crucial and challenging issue. In the second part of my thesis, I will come back to show why this specific aim is relevant for my own analysis.

We should keep in mind that a core aim of this thesis is to show that throughout Yannaras’ work one will find a complete theory on education, and that this theory has a political and a Trinitarian foundation. So far, I have referred to some things that the philosopher finds problematic with respect to the Greek education of the 1980’s. I have

referred to concepts such as “citizens” and “egocentric beings.” Also, this section intended to show that throughout Yannaras’ work one shall find ideas about what education should aim at. Yet, how can we move from these concepts to what I describe as Yannaras’ own philosophy of education? In order to show this, I will firstly present and interpret some other aspects of Yannaras’ philosophy, theology and political theory. In my view, these aspects will help us understand how Yannaras conceives of the notions of “egocentrism” and “citizens.” This analysis will be exposed in Chapters 2 and 3. Then in Chapter 4, I will come back to suggest a very specific connection between Yannaras’ criticism (as presented in Chapter 1) and the detailed analysis exposed in Chapters 2 and 3. According to my argument, Yannaras’ theory of education is going to be the result of this synthesis. Hence, the next chapter (Chapter 2) is the starting point of a long process; that is, the process of my interpretation of some aspects of Yannaras’ philosophical and theological work. Especially because there are many things that will be addressed, I have organised the material in what I take to be the most suitable order. Hence, when it comes to the next chapter per se, I will discuss some concepts of Yannaras’ ontology which I think that are necessary for us to conceive of the notion of “egocentric beings” and the notion of “citizens.” I will depart with the concept of “υπάρξεις [beings]” (2000, p. 24) in Yannaras’ work, which I will link to his notion of the “Person.”

CHAPTER 2: WHAT KIND OF BEINGS?

i. A Personalist Ontology

I use the term "beings" to translate the Greek notion "υπάρξεις" that Yannaras uses in his *Paideia* text (2000, p. 24). This Greek term is the plural form of the Greek noun "ύπαρξη", which means "existence." Both Yannaras' notion of "egocentric beings" and his concept of "citizens" refer to humans who exist; they both refer to beings. This is precisely why I believe that a proper understanding of these notions requires the analysis of some concepts from Yannaras' ontological work. More particularly, it is the concept of the "Person" that helps us with the task of clarification.

Yannaras is a "personalist philosopher" (Kaniaru, 2012, p. 89), or according to how Grigoropoulou has it, most of the "philosophical and theological thought of Yannaras is personalistic" (Grigoropoulou, 2008, p. 161). Among the people who have written on or simply mentioned Yannaras' understanding of the "Person", some draw from his *Person and Eros* (e.g. Grigoropoulou, 2008, p. 125; Leśniewski, 2019, p. 53). In his work about the concept of "Person" in education, Sam D. Rocha describes Yannaras' *Person and Eros* as "dense, sporadic, and mystical" (Rocha, 2010, p. 111) – and rightly so. Yannaras writes in a way which often makes it hard to understand his points. Yet, some aspects of his "prosopo-centric ontology" (as some people like to call it; see Ip, 2019, p. 41) are certainly less complicated, especially for the scholar who has a genuine interest in the areas from which Yannaras draws: Ancient Greek philosophy and Early Christian theology.

More particularly, in this book Yannaras goes as far back as the 4th century and refers to Gregory of Nyssa, an Early Church Father. He argues that the concept of "prosôpon

[person]" (Yannaras, 2007b, p. 15) is taken by Gregory of Nyssa to be an ontological concept; more specifically, it stood for what Aristotle called "primary substances" (Yannaras, 2007b, p. 16). As Yannaras reminds us, throughout Aristotle's classical metaphysics one finds the distinction between "primary and secondary substances" (Yannaras, 2007b, p. 16). The secondary substances are usually described by the term "essence" (ibid., p. 16). An example to show this would be the notion of human essence. From this perspective, the human essence can be understood as "the human" in general. Whereas the "primary substances" refer to the individual actualisation of an essence. When it comes to the human essence example, we could think of a certain human, e.g., Ben. Ben is *this specific* human, not the human in general. In other words, Ben needs to be understood as one way in which the human essence is actualised.

Therefore, from this book, it is evident that Yannaras aligns himself with a long intellectual (theological and philosophical) tradition: the Eastern Orthodox Christian one. More particularly, one must agree with Alexis Torrance who points out that, as it is the case with thinkers such as Vladimir Lossky and John Zizioulas, Yannaras has written on "contemporary Orthodox theological anthropology" (Torrance, 2020, p. 2). However, despite its link to Christian philosophy, *Person and Eros* is also the work where Yannaras gives us the first notion that allows us to make some progress with respect to the concept of "egocentric beings" and the notion of "citizens." More particularly, one thing that we can extract from this work is that both refer to "Persons." Apart from this, we must think that "Persons" are unique beings.

ii. “Otherness”

Both in his *Person and Eros* but also in other works, Yannaras emphasises the view that each human being is a “unique” being (2007b, p. 43). According to his analysis, it is the difference between the notion of the “Person” and the concept of “essence” that brings this uniqueness into the game. More particularly, in the previous section I referred to how Yannaras read Gregory of Nyssa. As I showed, he described him as a thinker who applied the Aristotelean, classical metaphysics to his theology. I explained this view by offering an example. Ben, I wrote, is a “Person”, in the ontological sense; that is, Ben is one way in which the human essence is actualised. In this section, one should add that apart from representing one way in which the human essence is actualised, Ben also represents a *unique* way in which the human essence is actualised. Like Jack, Maria, etc., Ben is a unique Person. All in all, as Grigoropoulou puts it in her description of Yannaras; “‘Person’ would mean the unequalled expression of the common attributes of the one nature, the unique way in which the one, indivisible nature could be realized” (Grigoropoulou, 2008, p. 132).

Sotiris Mitralexis explains Yannaras’ term “activities,” reminding us that, according to the philosopher, each human (or Person) needs to be perceived as an acting being. According to Mitralexis’ analysis of Yannaras’ work, the very way in which each Person (or “hypostasis”, Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 104) realises their essence (“substance” ibid., p.194) is by acting. In Mitralexis’ words:

> To mention an example, smiling, to smile, or laughing, to laugh, is an activity of the human substance and nature, it is to be found in every human being, in every particular manifestation of ‘humanity’. But each human person manifests smiling or laughing, i.e. smiles and laughs, in a

> completely unique way, in a way that actualizes (not merely reveals, but actualizes) his substance as a hypostasis, in a way that actualizes complete otherness. The activities, being distinct from both the substance itself and the hypostasis itself, belong to the substance but actualize the hypostasis. (2014b, p. 104).

In my view, a good way to conceive of this idea is to go back to our previous example about Ben. As we saw, Ben represents a unique way in which human essence is realised. Yet, this realisation must not be conceived as a static event. Firstly, it unfolds in time, and secondly it occurs through action. Ben realises human essence "in a completely unique way" (ibid., p. 104) by doing things: by breathing, walking, sleeping, standing, eating, working, doing art, etc.

When Yannaras talks about the uniqueness of each human being, he often uses the Greek term "ἑτερότητα" (e.g. 2008, 3.4.3). Some translators of Yannaras' work employ the English term "otherness" to refer to Yannaras' "ἑτερότητα." (e.g., Keith Scram, in Yannaras, 1991, p. 27; Norman Russell in Yannaras, 2004, p. 113; Haralambos Ventis in Yannaras, 2005a, p. 65). Apart from scholars like Nichifor Tănase who also use the term "alterity" (Tănase, 2014, p. 254), the same applies to many people from the secondary literature who refer to this notion (Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 104; Skliris, 2019 p. 38, Cole, 2019, p. 301). Since in my own discussion I will also stick to this concept, it is important to emphasise from the beginning that the term "otherness" must not create any confusion to the reader who is not familiar with Yannaras' work or with continental philosophy in general. This means that the term "otherness" does not seek to address a mere difference, e.g. the "other" who is different from what "I am." Instead, "otherness" means something similar (yet not entirely identical) to what it signifies when some people employ it in their references to the work of Emmanuel Levinas. Although it is

true, as Antony Kaniaru writes, that "Yannaras is not influenced by Levinas" (Kaniaru, 2012, p. 88), the two continental philosophers have been linked by Andrew Louth who remarks that "it is arguable that Levinas could provide a much better philosophical foundation for the position Yannaras embraces than Heidegger himself" (Louth in Yannaras, 2005a, p. 8). In Jennifer Mc Weeny's discussion of the French philosopher, it is evident that the notion of "otherness" (2009, p. 5) stands for "radical alterity" (ibid., p. 5), a concept which is very close to the notion of uniqueness. Hence it is one thing to say that something is different from another thing, while it is quite another to note that something is unique, namely, different from all other things.

Referring to the Yannarian "relational ontology" (Cole, 2019, p. 302) Cole states that "the 'absolute otherness' of the subject can only emerge, exist, and ultimately flourish in relationship" (ibid., p. 301; see also in Koronaios, 2018, p. 173). However, apart from this comment, he also seems to take a step further noting that, from Yannaras' point of view, "we know ourselves by knowing other people and things" (Cole, 2019, p. 301). This interpretation recalls Daniel Payne's discussion of "self-consciousness" in Yannaras; "in comparing myself with another self," writes Payne, "I become aware of my own uniqueness. This self-consciousness is my awareness of my own identity [...]" (Payne, 2006, p. 465). According to Payne's reading of Yannaras: "the uniqueness of the person is only revealed in and through relationship" (Payne, 2006, p. 466). Hence, if I get this right, what Cole did by this comment is to offer us an additional interpretation of the link that Yannaras suggests which can be further explained by the following example: Imagine a unique Person who relates to other unique "Persons" and they see them doing various things, such as laughing. Then, by observing this laughter, the Person may begin to realise that their own way of laughing is unique and unrepeatable. They do not laugh the way any other Person does.

These views are not only helpful for the scholars who seek to understand Yannaras' conception of "otherness" in "Persons" thoroughly. More importantly, these analyses remind us that there is another, crucial element of Yannaras' personalist theory that comes across quite a lot throughout his work. Along with the notion of "otherness," this feature is particularly significant for someone who aims at conceiving of Yannaras' "egocentric beings" and "citizens." It can be summarised by the following aphorism; Persons, for Yannaras, are necessarily relational beings.

iii. Types of "Relation"

Thomas D. Williams and Jan Olof Bengtsson tell us that personalism "emphasizes […] the person's essentially relational or social dimension" (2022, n.p.). Therefore, as for the work of other personalist philosophers (e.g. Martin Buber or John Zizioulas), so for the work of Yannaras; in many parts throughout his oeuvre, one encounters the view that the human Person is relational. Scholars like Andrew Louth (in Yannaras, 2005a, p. 7-8) or Sam Rocha (2010, p. 111) remind us of a certain passage in Yannaras' *Person and Eros*, where the author makes a linguistic observation. To be sure, this linguistic observation is found in other treatises of the author (e.g. 2016c, p. 38). It refers to the word "πρόσωπο" (2016c, p. 45), the notion that Russell translates as "Person" (2007b, p.5).

Yannaras refers to the origin of the word (2007b, p. 5; 2016, p. 38). More specifically, he notes that it is produced by the preposition "pros" (a term that Norman Russell translates as "towards", 2007b, p. 5) and the word "ôps" ("'eye," "face," "countenance"' in Russell's translation, 2007b, p. 5). Hence, the Greek term for "Person" Yannaras tells us, already describes a "referential reality" (2007b, p. 5) – a being who relates to someone else. Rocha argues that the Greek language helps

Yannaras to "direct us towards an ontological and existential reality" (Rocha, 2010, p. 111). Frederick Dallmayr adds that this observation suggests that Yannaras does not describe the Person "as a self-centered identity but as an open or "ekstatic" relationship" (2019, p. 9). Both Dallmayr's and Rocha's observations are helpful for us to understand Yannaras' account of relation in *Person and Eros*. Indeed, this is a work in which, apart from playing a central role, the notion of "relation" is presented mainly as an ontological concept (e.g. 2007b, p. 18).

However, my own analysis will not be limited to this specific book. More precisely, I think that there are also some other works that deserve our attention since they can assist us in conceiving of Yannaras' notion of "relation" in a more thorough way. For instance, one should look at the comments that Yannaras makes in his *Relational Ontology* (2011b). In a discussion that does not refer solely to humans, the philosopher calls us to understand "each one of the atomic realizations (hypostases) of each species" as "a unique, dissimilar and unrepeatable mode of existence of the species." (Yannaras, 2011b, 3.4.2, p. 13) The "species" themselves consist of "simple chemical elements" that "are correlated and put together in a specific (again, given) mode" (ibid., p. 13). In simpler terms, Yannaras tells us that each human being *is* relations. It is our very "constitution" (ibid., p. 13) which is relational, in the sense that we are combinations of various other things (i.e., natural elements). Although he does not use the term "Person" in this specific passage, we must certainly think that this is another way in which the notion of relation applies to the concept of the "Person." After all, we know that throughout his *Person and Eros*, the "Person" is discussed in very similar terms (e.g. as a "unique" way in which "essence" is actualised, (2007b, p. 17)).

Also, another point has to do with Yannaras' reading of Karl Marx. As Cole puts it, "Marx is a significant interlocutor of Yannaras rather than one of the seminal influences

on his thought" (Cole, 2019, p. 301, see note 26). This means that the discussion of Marx's ideas takes place only a few times throughout Yannaras' work. Despite these limited references, however, I believe that Marx is a figure who has a considerable effect on Yannaras' conception of "relation." People like Gligorić (2021, p. 263), Skliris (2019, p. 340) agree that Yannaras is sympathetic to Marx's description of the human being as a relational being—or, in Yannaras' own formulation, as a "γεγονός *σχέσης* [relational event]" (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 170). Yet, neither of these authors refer extensively to this influence, nor do they seem to notice how this affects Yannaras' "Person." To be sure, it is true that in this specific context the author does not refer to the notion of "Person." Yet, despite this absence, my point goes clearly beyond the idea that Yannaras agrees with Marx; I claim that if someone wants to understand Yannaras' account of the relationality of "Person", the early work of Marx is crucial.

More particularly, throughout *Recta Ratio and Social Practice*, it is evident that Yannaras is fascinated by Marx's conception of the human as a "γεγονός *σχέσης* [relational event]" (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 170). For instance, he tells us that for Marx, the human being is related to the elements of the "του κόσμου που μας περιβάλλει [world that surrounds us]" (ibid., p. 104). From this perspective the human being needs "τροφή, ποτό, ένδυμα [food, drink, clothes]" (ibid., p. 104) in order to survive, which itself entails that they need to establish a "σχέση με τον κόσμο [relation with the world]" (ibid., p. 104). In this context, therefore, "relation" represents the very mode in which Yannaras' "Persons" preserve themselves in life. Thus, the "Persons" are "relations" (among chemical elements) who establish new relations in order to survive.

One may possibly add that what Yannaras misses in this book is that even prior to these relationships, the Person is always and necessarily a part of a relation. For instance, existing as a part of a larger whole, they are always in contact with something

external to them. Their body always "touches" something material – air, light, etc. To clarify this through a paradox; we must think that, being corporeal, humans cannot be "in the middle of nothing." This also affects the degree of freedom that Persons enjoy when it comes to these relationships. While, for instance, Persons are free not to establish a relationship with food (they are free not to eat) they are not free to cut ties with every single thing; as Persons, they will always be part of a relation with an element that is external to them.

Moreover, as it is the case with other personalists, Yannaras refers to interpersonal relations quite frequently. These relations are going to be examined later in the thesis. For now, I will only add that from the way he describes these relations throughout his work, it seems that the philosopher implies that, in these relational contexts, we enjoy some sort of freedom. In my reading, this freedom refers to things such as our ability to influence the future of a relationship. Although I believe that this notion is implied in other parts of his work too, it is much more evident in Yannaras' poetic description of erotic-love found in his *Variations on the Song of the Songs*. In this book, Yannaras describes a type of erotic relationship that does finish well, writing; "By contrast the breakdown nourishes the hope of another miracle which will last. The next Other will accept me without reservation, will fall in love with me without restraint. That is why I need a breakdown of relationship, violent and irrevocable" (Yannaras, 2005b, p. 15). According to my reading, we must think that Yannaras is a philosopher who believes that, in at least some of our relationships with others, we enjoy the freedom of choice to either continue or interrupt the relationship. For instance, one's choice to disappear without a trace is an expression of this liberty.

Another type of freedom refers to the very *way* in which we relate to others. For example, the seeds of this notion are apparent when Yannaras reminds us that loving in

the form of *agape* is always a free choice. Although this is a view that the author usually employs for his treatment of the Holy Trinity, it is certainly present in some of his discussions about humans too. Take, for instance, his reference to Adam and Eve. The philosopher writes, "But the realization of life as communion and relationship is nevertheless a fruit of freedom - there is no necessary or compulsory communion or relationship of love" (1991, p. 77). This passage is quite important for my analysis here since it also refers to things such as "the possibility of a different use of freedom" (1991, p. 77). In simpler terms, according to my reading, this view does not merely suggest that one cannot be forced to love someone else. It also conveys the message that sometimes we enjoy the freedom to determine our very role in the relationship. For instance, we may choose to introduce things such as love even if the other part of the relation (the other Person) does not want to follow this route; say, we may choose to start loving (in the form of *agape*) our colleagues at work, regardless of how they treat us.

As it is evident from his discussion about Adam and Eve, this kind of freedom of choice does not only refer to relationships between humans. It also applies to the relationship between a human Person and God. Hence, one must note that this freedom is also part and parcel of Yannaras' theology. Persons may choose to establish a relation with God, or they may choose to avoid any single relation with God. They can decide to establish a *loving* relation with God, or they may even decide to hate God. When it comes to the relation between Persons and God, this freedom of choice is relevant for the explication of another type of freedom that I believe one should extract from Yannaras' work. This is what one may call freedom from "egocentrism."

iv. Yannaras' Inner Freedom: Some Preliminary Remarks

As set out in the preceding section, implicit to the notion of love is the idea of choice; to start loving in the form of *agape* means to do something freely. This is not the only way in which Yannaras conceives of "freedom." In fact, he uses the concept of "freedom" in many parts throughout his work, and often, with different meanings. One of the books in which the Greek philosopher devotes some space to discuss his conception of "ελευθερία [freedom]"[22] is the *Recta Ratio and Social Practice* (2006c, p. 284-285). In this work, "freedom" (ibid., p. 284) follows two directions (Koronaios, 2018, p. 173). Firstly, it refers to what Petrà calls "outside the subject" (Petrà, 2019, p. 62). Secondly it bears what Gligorić describes as an "interior dimension" (Gligorić, 2021, p. 278). What lies "outside the subject" (Petrà, 2019, p. 62) could be conceived of as a kind of *political* freedom. The "interior dimension" (Gligorić, 2021, p. 278) might be understood as a concept that belongs to Yannaras' moral theory, although its relation to the political is not insignificant.

Hence, one may point out that this book allows us to categorise Yannaras among those philosophers who emphasise that the problem of freedom must not be limited to the discussion on external constraints. This view is finely summarised in Charles Taylor's study that includes "…cases in which the obstacles to freedom are internal" (1985, p. 222). Probably the most known philosopher who focuses on what happens inside humans is Rousseau, a thinker whose views about freedom are very different to Yannaras. As we read in Matthew Simpson's *Rousseau's Theory of Freedom*, Rousseau referred to two kinds of freedom, the first of which is "civil freedom" (2006, p. 92). For

[22] From now on I will use the English term "freedom."

Rousseau, Simpson tells us, this liberty requires things such as a "government" (ibid., p. 53) by which "individual rights would be protected both from outside dangers and from the members of one's own society" (ibid., p. 53). This political system would restrict civil liberties ("rights" ibid., p. 53) only in the case where this was crucial for the benefit "of the whole" (ibid., p. 54). Yet, apart from civil freedom, writes Simpson, Rousseau advocated a type of "moral freedom" (ibid., p. 92). In his own words, this form

> of freedom is in some respects similar to civil freedom in as much as it refers to the power of individual citizens to act according to their own choosing without coercion or hindrance. The difference is that civil freedom refers to the absence of external impediments to alternative actions whereas moral freedom concerns, at least in part, internal impediments. (2006, p. 92)

Simpson clarifies Rousseau's concept by offering a thought experiment. This refers to "an alcoholic who genuinely believes that his life would be better if he stopped drinking, yet finds himself unable to choose sobriety" (ibid., p. 92). Then Simpson invites us to assume that this alcoholic is a member of a society that allows its members "to drink alcohol" (ibid., p. 92). This is precisely the point where the distinction between the two liberties is clarified. In Simpson's own terms:

> This person possesses civil freedom in the sense that the laws are silent, which means that he has a legally protected space to do what he wishes without interference from others. Yet he does not possess moral freedom,

> in Rousseau's use of the term, because he is unable to live according to his own judgment about what is good. (ibid., p. 92)

Like Taylor and Rousseau, Yannaras is certainly a thinker who prefers not to limit his discussion of freedom to what is external to humans (Koronaios, 2018, p. 173). Moreover, it seems that there is another important overlap among these authors, since all three choose to link their external freedom to the political. For instance, while Rousseau has his "civil freedom," Charles Taylor refers to political restrictions such as "laws" (1985, p. 218). Yet, although these similarities invite scholars to read Yannaras as another philosopher who focuses on two domains of freedom (an external and an internal), one needs to be very careful before one performs this specific reading. The reason why this extra cautiousness is required relates to Yannaras' understanding of the "interior dimension" (Gligorić, 2021, p. 278) of freedom. In my view, unlike Rousseau's, this form of freedom is profoundly theological.

In the next section, I am going to focus exclusively on the "interior dimension" (ibid., p. 278) for which I will offer my own explanation. As it happens with Rousseau's work, Yannaras' "interior dimension" is different from political freedom. However, both are equally necessary in order for someone to be considered free in the proper sense (see the discussion in Yannaras, 2006c, p. 284). In other words, in Yannaras' philosophy, a human should (ideally) be in the process of enjoying both freedoms.

In my view, although the distinction between political and inner freedom is offered in his *Recta Ratio and Social Practice*, Yannaras' account of inner freedom is encountered in other works too. It is described by phrases such as "the freedom of the person from nature" (2007b, p. 235) or, more poetically, as "the erotic self-transcendence of individuality" (Yannaras, 1991, p. 74). According to the view I will defend, these are

related to terms such as “egocentrism” or “egoism” (Gligorić, 2021, p. 278). In simpler terms, contrary to Rousseau, I believe that Yannaras’ inner freedom is inextricably linked to the *theological* conception of the notion of “egocentrism” that I will describe. From this point of view, humans are internally free when they are in the process of fighting against this type of egocentrism. Hence, in order to describe this type of freedom, I will uncover the theological underpinnings of egocentrism in Yannaras work.

v. Egocentrism and Inner Freedom in Yannaras: A Theological Approach

Christian Maurer makes a distinction between “two somewhat different senses” of the concept of “egoism” (2019, p. 2). He writes that the notion is understood “first, in a more technical and morally neutral sense to contrast desires that are ultimately self-interested and aim at the agent’s own benefit with desires that are altruistic or disinterested and aim at the benefit of someone else.” Apart from this, for Maurer, the notion is also “used in proximity to ‘selfishness’ to blame someone for having acted for her own benefit only, possibly to the detriment of others” (ibid., p. 2).

Some descriptions of the inner version of freedom found in Yannaras’ *Recta Ratio and Social Practice*, portray this concept as being connected to notions such as “egoism” (Gligorić, 2021, p. 278) or “egocentric elements” (Koronaios, 2018, p. 173). Apart from this, throughout *Recta Ratio and Social Practice* the inner version of “freedom” is described in entirely secular terms, that is without reference to Christian theology (see the analysis in Yannaras, 2006c, p. 284). This is precisely why scholars who have described this type of freedom do not include any theological dimension in their analyses (see for instance, Gligorić, 2021, p. 278). I followed a similar, secular approach in my previous description of this kind of “freedom” (Koronaios, 2018, p. 173).

In this section, I wish to offer an alternative interpretation. According to this reading, freedom must be linked to a *theological* interpretation of the concept of "egocentrism." For some, a properly theological reading of this term would probably link Yannaras' view to the second conception of "egoism" described by Maurer. One reason for this is that Maurer's view recalls the negative connotations of the Biblical phrase "lovers of their owne selves" (2 Timothy, 3:2) Although Yannaras' notion of "egocentrism" is compatible with Maurer's idea, according to my own interpretation, we should not hesitate to assume that the author advocates a much broader (and more theological) conception of the term. Hence, according to my research, the best way for someone to conceive of "egocentrism" in Yannaras' work, is to think that it refers to one's refusal to entrust their lives completely to God. Specifically, it refers to one's denial to perform *kenosis*.

The concept of *kenosis* is found in Yannaras' "Ενθάδε Επέκεινα: Απόπειρες οντολογικής ερμηνευτικής" [*Here and Beyond: Attempts for anontological hermeneutics]*[23] (2016b). A common translation of *kenosis* is "self-emptying." Yannaras defines "*Κένωση*" [Kenosis)[24] as the act of giving one's entire life "στον Θεό" [to God] (2016, p. 48). The Person who performs *kenosis* entrusts their life to God. According to the author, when someone performs *kenosis* they refuse to live in an "τρόπο τοῦ ἀτομοκεντρισμοῦ" [atomocentric mode] (ibid., p. 45). "Atomocentrism", here must be understood as synonymous with "egocentrism." Hence, in my interpretation, understanding *kenosis* properly is crucial for clarifying the broad conception of "egocentrism" implied in Yannaras' work.

[23] My translation. Also, all passages used from this work are translated by me.
[24] From now on I will use the English term.

Recall that at the core of my discussion is “inner freedom,” a concept that refers to fighting one’s own egocentrism. Based on the description I suggested above, egocentrism refers to one’s refusal to entrust their life to God’s hands. I will now take a step further, asserting that inner freedom itself is deeply linked to the notion of *kenosis*. Humans attain freedom when they attempt to entrust their life to God. In other words, the human Person is free when they try to overcome anything that causes them to deny God. If I understand this correctly, Grigoropoulou would agree that Yannaras’ freedom refers to the divine-human connection which is founded upon trust;

> Man responds and relates to God with a complete self-consciousness, and the knowledge of God that he achieves is analogous to the degree to which man manages to overcome his nature, to stand out of his limited existence in a loving and self-abandoning movement. Still, the self-exiting on man’s side and his self-surrender into a relationship of communion with God incorporates man’s full will and freedom, and seeks to reveal the authentic image and the fullness of the human person. (2008, pp. 117-118)

The idea that one should have absolute trust in God is quite significant for the Orthodox Christian tradition from which Yannaras derives his thought. Arguably, one of the most vivid portrayals of this view is to be found in the liturgical text attributed to the Archbishop John Chrysostom of Constantinople, an Early Church Father who calls Christians to “[...] commend ourselves and each other and all our life to CHRIST our GOD” (John Chrysostom, 2002, p. 93). According to Yannaras, this type of *kenosis* is revealed by something that Jesus Christ does (2016, p. 36). Knowing that the time of his arrest and crucifixion approaches, Jesus prays to his Father, and gently asks if it is

possible not to go through this particularly painful process (Matthew 26: 38-43 as cited in Yannaras, 2016, p. 37). Yet, Jesus concludes his prayer by giving his consent (Yannaras, 2016, p. 40).

According to Yannaras, Jesus' prayer shows that he is in "πανικό [panic]" (ibid., p. 37) and "τρόμο [terror]" (ibid., p. 37). He is afraid to be arrested and killed. Despite his intentions, fear interferes with his willingness to follow the Father's plan. Yet, apart from the idea of fear, Yannaras refers to the notion of love. According to the author, the fact that Jesus finally steps back and allows his Father to pursue his "θέλω [will]" (2016, p. 40), needs to be understood as an "ἐρωτικὴ [erotic, loving]" act (ibid., p. 40).

In my interpretation of Yannaras' reference to love, it seems that it is out of love (but also trust) that Jesus chooses to follow this way of humility. Humility in this context does not only pertain to what one *thinks* but also to what one *does*; to be humble is to act according to the will of the beloved other, even if this will goes radically against one's own will. In Yannaras' perspective, Jesus' *kenotic* acts are acts of absolute "ἀγάπης [agape]" (2016, p. 36). For instance, he sacrifices his own life because he trusts and loves the Father.

Yannaras takes a step further, applying the notion of *kenosis* to humans. In my view, it is not very easy to understand his opinion about human *kenosis,* and thus, one must try to follow the signs that he offers. For instance, it is certainly the concept of "ἐμπιστοσύνη [trust]" (2016, p. 47) that the author employs for this particular discussion. As I take it, this suggests that humans must try to show "trust" (ibid., p. 47) towards God. Also they must try to overcome any obstacle preventing them from trusting God – such as fear perhaps. We should keep in mind that I have described "egocentrism" as one's very refusal to take such a step. This suggests that if someone fails to entrust their own life to God although they desire to do so, they are not

egocentric from Yannaras' point of view. The *kenotic* free mode of existence does not refer exclusively to the Persons who have managed to entrust their life to God, but also to the Persons who want to do it and strive for it.

Perhaps the best way to understand Yannaras' notion of human *kenosis* is to assume that he uses Jesus as a model for humans. From this perspective, the author appears to be a theorist who aligns with some Christian texts that describe the Christian life as an emulation of Jesus – John of Climacus' sentence summarises this view well: "A Christian is an imitator of Christ in thought, word and deed, as far as this is humanly possible, and he believes rightly and blamelessly in the Holy Trinity" (1982, p. 74). Following this direction, one must probably conclude that human *kenosis* is a term that implies an active stance. More particularly, in his references to Jesus, Yannaras reminds us that the Second Person of the Trinity "ἔγινε κατὰ πάντα ἄνθρωπος" [became human in all respects] (Yannaras, 2016, p. 34In simpler terms,I believe that a plausible reading of Yannaras would highlight that the philosopher does not describe Jesus as someone who simply accepts the will of the Father for his own life. Instead, he implies that Jesus pursued the Father's will actively, in the sense that he played a cardinal role in realising the plan of the Father. According to Yannaras, this plan "στόχευε [aimed]" (ibid., p. 35) at "*θέωση* τοῦ ἀνθρώπου [human theosis]" (ibid., p. 35).

This specific interpretation of Yannaras suggests that human *kenosis* is an act of trust which also implies action. For instance, it goes beyond the idea that someone simply agrees with God. It presupposes a type of Person who seeks to realise the will of God, even if this will is not an easy task. From this point of view, *kenosis* looks like a process where one trusts God by dedicating their lives to the discovery and the realisation of God's will. For instance, we know from the Scriptures that Jesus asked humans to apply *agape* to their relationships with others (John 13:34). From the freedom-as-*kenosis*

point of view, this suggests that loving others is *itself* an act of freedom-as-*kenosis*; it presupposes that the Person trusts God, in the sense that they apply God's will to their lives, regardless of how difficult this is. Indeed, human Persons might discover that *agape* is not an easy process and sometimes it is much more comfortable for someone to give up. Yet, if they want to be free in the *kenotic* sense I describe here, they must keep trying to love others, especially because they trust God.

I therefore suggest that a good interpretation of Yannaras' insights must include the notion of "trust," but also the idea of God's will. According to the approach I wish to defend, in the context of Yannaras' *kenotic* freedom, a human Person accepts that God is in control of everything – even of these aspects over which humans *do* have some control. Also, a Person tries to discover what God wills about the aspects of their lives over which they have a certain amount of control; then, the Person tries to adjust their actions to God's will. Finally, this approach on *kenosis* implies a specific way of dealing with the aspects of one's life that one does not control at all – such as whether an unexpected natural disaster will cause them harm tomorrow morning. In this case, the Person should try to deal with these aspects in a way which does not go against the will of God. To summarise my interpretation: Yannaras invites human Persons to love God and to adopt a *kenotic* lifestyle.

Before I turn to the next chapter, I must note that, according to my view, there is a specific relationship between the freedom-as-*kenosis*, and the freedom of choice to which I referred in section iii. More particularly, we must think that freedom of choice is *presupposed* for freedom-as-*kenosis*. In section iii I argued that, in Yannaras' case, human Persons are relational. Also, I noted that human Persons enjoy some degree of freedom, in the sense that they can choose to determine their own stance within their relationships. I referred to the idea of love, for which Yannaras wrote that "[…] the

realization of life as communion and relationship is nevertheless a fruit of freedom - there is no necessary or compulsory communion or relationship of love" (1991, p. 77). As I pointed out, this does not only mean that a human Person cannot be forced to apply love to their relationships. It also means that the human Person is *free* to choose to begin loving another Person if they wish to. According to my interpretation, the example of *kenosis* allows us to take a step further, since it reveals that Yannaras calls human Persons to use their freedom of choice in a very specific way; a way that serves their freedom-as-*kenosis*. In other words, one could argue that Yannaras' theology invites Persons to *choose* to trust God, especially because he is aware of "the possibility of a different use of freedom" (1991, p. 77). Yannaras' inner freedom is the result of a choice taken freely, and thus, according to my interpretation, it would be a mistake to overlook this specific link between the two freedoms.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter I introduced Yannaras' notion of the "Person." I have also referred to Yannaras' concept of "egocentrism" which is linked to his inner dimension of freedom. This suggests that I have made some progress towards uncovering one of the two elements that, according to my analysis, are linked to the way in which Yannaras understands the aims of education in his *Paideia* text. The first is the notion of "egocentric beings" and the second is the notion of "citizens." My discussion of "Person" and "egocentrism" help us to start understanding what Yannaras means when he refers to "egocentric beings." In my perspective, "egocentric beings" are the Persons who refuse to follow the will of God especially because they refuse to establish a relation of trust with God. Having offered this first clarification I will turn to discuss what I think that Yannaras means when he refers to "citizens." After the analysis of this

complicated notion, I will turn to offer a thorough description of how the concepts "egocentric beings" and "citizens" function in what I take to be Yannaras' educational thought.

CHAPTER 3: WHAT KIND OF CITIZENS? MY INTERPRETATION OF YANNARAS' POLITICAL THOUGHT

Introduction

In this chapter I will refer to the notion of "citizen" in Yannaras' work. In my view, a thorough conception of this notion requires the analysis of many aspects of Yannaras' work. Some of them are theological (metaphysical) while others are political. As I will show, Yannaras' politics are Trinitarian politics. This means that, according to my reading, Yannaras views the Holy Trinity as the model for human political life. In my own interpretation of his political philosophy, this affects the way he conceives of his "citizen" in many ways. Yet, in my analysis, one of the most important ways in which Yannaras' trinitarian thought influences his conception of the "citizen" is revealed by the notion of political freedom. From my point of view, it is impossible for us to conceive of what counts as a "citizen" from Yannaras' point of view, without taking into account the fact that this citizen must be a free citizen. To be sure, this freedom certainly refers to the internal domain that I described in the previous chapter. This means that Yannaras' citizen must be a Person who trusts God through a *kenotic* movement. Yet, apart from being internally free, this Person must necessarily be a politically free citizen, too. My analysis of Yannaras' politics will begin by a brief overview of

Yannaras' trinitarian theology. This analysis will focus on the trinitarian foundation of the notion of *agape* which is, arguably, one of the most central concepts of Yannaras' Trinitarian theology. Then, I will proceed with explaining Yannaras' Trinitarian politics. After this, I will talk about Yannaras' external freedom, that is, his political freedom. At the end of this chapter, I will have given my own account of what the notion of "citizen" means in Yannaras' thought. Then the ground will be ready for me to show the mode in which this notion applies to Yannaras' educational theory.

i. The Metaphysics of *Agape* in Yannaras' Work: Freedom and the Trinity

> [...] That of the Immortals did not exist until Eros had brought together all the ingredients of the world, and from their marriage Heaven, Ocean, Earth and the imperishable race of blessed gods sprang into being. Thus, our origin is very much older than that of the dwellers in Olympus. We are the offspring of Eros; there are a thousand proofs to show it. We have wings and we lend assistance to lovers [...].

This is what the Chorus Leader tells us about the history of the universe in Aristophanes' *Birds* (Aristophanes, 1938, p. 762). It is a moment of the play where he expresses pity for perishable beings such as humans because they are "mortal" and "chained to the earth" (ibid., p. 762). Apart from this expression of pity in this specific passage Aristophanes provides us with an unusual account of love, a type of Eros that goes well beyond human affairs. Eros represents an element which holds nature unified,

or, in Burch's expression, "a movement binding the universe together, from which is born a race of immortal gods" (Burch, 2000, p. 21). To be sure, the use of love throughout the Ancient Greek literature as a metaphysical notion is not unique to Aristophanes. As I will discuss more thoroughly in another chapter, perhaps one of the most well-known metaphysical "loves" one can find in Plato. In the *Symposium*, for instance, Eros is described as a "great spirit" [*daimon]*, (202e; Plato, 2008, p. 39), that is, "something in between mortal and immortal" (202d, ibid., p. 38).

A similar way to describe love survived in the Christian paradigm as well. A common example that shows this has to do with the fact that love (in this case *agape*) is not only something that humans are famously asked to apply to their relations with one another. Apart from this, *agape* is one of the concepts that one can safely use when one tries to offer a description about God. According to a very old Christian view, *agape* must be thought of as a notion that refers to God's very mode of being. This conceptualisation of *agape* often departs from a very specific description found in John's First Epistle, according to which: "God is love" (e.g. 1 John 4:8; or 1 John: 4:16). This is a phrase that Yannaras uses quite frequently, too.

From early Christianity already, (that is, long before Yannaras) this specific phrase was interpreted in a literal way. For instance, Origen argued that the meaning of this phrase is "that God [Father] Himself is Charity [love] and that He [the Son, Jesus] who is of God also is Charity" (Origen, 1957, p. 32). A few centuries later, Maximos the Confessor (c. 580 – c. 662) probably adopted the same, literal approach on John's formulation, writing, "Many have said much about love, but you will find love itself only if you seek it among the disciples of Christ. For only they have true Love as love's teacher" (Maximos the Confessor, 1990, p. 113).

To be sure, the idea that God Himself must be identified with love is still popular among many thinkers (e.g. Godzieba, 2011, p. 141). For instance, Marmion and Nieuwenhove point out that John's phrase must not be taken as "a sentimental metaphor" (2011, p. 7). Others prefer to explain John's expression using ontological concepts, such as "essence." Wolfhart Pannenberg for instance notes that John's phrase tells us that "love as the power that manifests itself in the mutual relations of the trinitarian persons is identical with the divine essence" (Pannenberg, 2004, p. 427).

When it comes to Yannaras' work, the approach does not change significantly. Aidan Nichols summarises this very nicely, writing that "Yannaras, taking his cue from the First Letter of John, identifies love with the restoration of the divine image […]" (Nichols, 1999, p. 191). In other words, I believe that we must not hesitate to classify the author amongst the thinkers who opt for a literal interpretation of John's formulation: "When Christian revelation declares that 'God is love' (1 John 4:16) it is referring not to a particular property of God's 'conduct' but to what God *is* as the fullness of triadic personal communion" (Yannaras, 2015b, p. 207). Here, the concept of "triadic" shows us that, like Pannenberg's, Yannaras' understanding of John's phrase is closely connected to the Christian idea of the Trinity. In this context, I am not interested in comparing Yannaras' theory about the Trinity with other theories. Instead, I will focus on how Yannaras' interpretation of John's phrase is related to the concept of Trinity, and eventually to that of freedom. More particularly, according to my reading, Yannaras' understanding of John's formulation entails that *agape* must be understood as a form of freedom. As I will argue later in this chapter, this is particularly important for us to conceive of Yannaras' political thought properly.

One must begin by the fact that, like other continental philosophers of the 20th century, Yannaras focused considerably on the concept of apophaticism, having been influenced

by the work of one of the most famous apophatic theologians of Christianity, Dionysius the Areopagite. One of the basic assumptions of Yannaras' apophaticism is the idea that God is absolutely transcendental, and thus cannot be fully understood by human reason. God, in this perspective, is thought of as a being beyond anything that the human mind has ever captured or will ever manage to capture. As he puts it in one of his works, there is no "[...) possibility of any human apprehension of a form of existence that escapes the presupposition with which human experience understands existence" (Yannaras, 2005a, p. 63).

Even the words "being" or "existence" are problematic for some representatives of apophatic theology. For instance, the Greek philosopher quotes Maximos the Confessor, another apophatic theologian. Commenting on the work of Dionysios of Areopagite, Maximos writes that God "is not being because he is and surpasses existence, being everything, as creator, and being nothing, as transcendent, or rather being beyond both transcendence and being" (Maximos the Confessor, PG 4 260D-261A, as cited in Yannaras, 2005a, p. 78). In simpler terms, one could note that some people on this specific apophatic trajectory even hesitate to claim that God himself is a "being" or that God exists. The reason for this scepticism is that terms such as "existing" or "being" refer to the created world, while God is un-created.

Yet, although Yannaras agrees that God remains beyond comprehension, he nevertheless aligns himself to one of the central ideas of Christianity, according to which God discloses himself to the world: he "is revealed in history" (Yannaras, ibid., p. 20) through "the incarnation of the Word" (ibid., p. 22), that is, of Jesus Christ. According to Yannaras' emphatic formulation, "The God of the Church is the God of historical experience, not the God of theoretical assumptions and abstract syllogisms" (ibid., p. 20). This entails that being God and human at the same time (as the Christian

doctrine of Incarnation suggests) Jesus disclosed some things about God's mode of existence. These things, however, were only hints; they were not full explanations of how God is. For instance, Yannaras refers to an example throughout the Gospel of John, where Jesus says that he and his Father "are one" (John 10.31 as cited in ibid., p. 21).

These references testify to the fact that Yannaras accepts what in Eastern Orthodox theology is called "trinitarian theology." To be sure, trinitarian theology is not only a project of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Historically, it began long before 1054, which is the year when the official separation (the Great Schism) between Eastern and Western Christianity took place. Also, numerous Western Christian theologians have been writing profusely on this topic for hundreds of years. Yet, since I believe that it is Eastern Orthodox theology specifically that has shaped Yannaras' theological thought, I will mostly refer to this tradition here. In all cases (Eastern and Western), Trinitarian theology is based on Scripture passages such as the ones that Yannaras mentions in his work; in these contexts, when Jesus refers to God he talks about three "Persons" and not just one (1991, p. 22).

The basis of the Eastern Orthodox Christian understanding of the Trinity is finely summarised in one hymn of this denomination, that belongs to a group of hymns called "evlogitaria". There, we read that the Trinity is constituted by Three Persons that share the same "οὐσία" ('ἐν μιᾷ τῇ οὐσίᾳ') (Συλλειτουργικόν, 1996, p. 67). The term "οὐσία" (ousia) means "essence." More particularly, this theological view tells us that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are divine because they share the divine essence. The seeds of this notion can be found in the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 when the Christian Church of the time decided to distance itself from some heresies. More particularly, the Synod pronounced that the Son (Jesus) was "ὁμοούσιος" (homoousios, see e.g. P.F. Beatrice, 2002, p. 243), that is, of the "same essence" as the Father.

Similarly, authors who are celebrated as saints and as notable theologians by the Eastern Christian Orthodox Church kept the same stance towards the Trinity; for instance, in one of his letters, Basil of Caesarea stated that the Persons of the Trinity share the same "essence," while their difference lies in the fact each of them represents a separate "hypostasis" (he means "substance") (St. Basil, 1895, p. 140).

It would be fair to note that Yannaras' understanding of trinitarian theology is very close to these views. At the same time, however, his conception must not be conceived of as distinct from his commitment to apophaticism, however paradoxical this combination might seem. Indeed, some readers may think that there is a striking inconsistency here; on the one hand Yannaras believes that God cannot be explained by terms that refer to the created world, and, on the other hand, himself is a Trinitarian theologian; that is, he is happy with the description of God through classical ontological terms such as "essence" or "substance." From this point of view, it seems that Yannaras cannot have both classical Trinitarianism and apophaticism.

Although this is not an easy topic, I tend to think that Yannaras has a reply about this inconsistency. It would probably go like this; one can be both an apophatic and a Trinitarian theologian at the same time, because one could attribute ontological terms to God, provided that, when they do so, they do not really aim at understanding God (see for more in Yannaras, 2005a, p. 71). The language they would use is less scientific and more poetic. From this point of view, the theologians express themselves by addressing something that they admit will always remain beyond human understanding and expression. In simpler terms, when they use these classical ontological terms, they do not really expect to arrive at a good explanation about God. Trying to lead the life indicated by God (through Jesus) is what is important for them—not trying to understand what God Himself is.

Even based on this poetic use of language, one must keep in mind that Yannaras' Trinitarian theology draws a lot from the Eastern Orthodox perspective. This means that, as it is the case with Basil of Caesaria, so for Yannaras: "God of ecclesiastical experience is *One* and *Triadic*" (ibid., p. 26). This means that three substances, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit actualise the same, one essence; the "Essence of Divinity" (ibid. p. 28). In the second chapter of this thesis, where I described the notion of the "Person," I showed that, for some authors, it is very close to the Aristotelean "primary substances" (Yannaras, 2007b, p. 16). Thus, it needs to be distinguished from the concept of "essence." As I noted, while human "essence" refers to being human in general, the "substance" refers to *this* human being – say for instance Ben. Thus, being an individual substance, Ben is a mode in which human essence is actualised—one among the many other modes, the many other Persons. Moreover, I showed that Ben represents a unique mode in which the human essence is actualised. Ben is a *unique* Person. It is upon this human-model that Yannaras (as well as countless other Christian theologians throughout the history of Christianity) based his understanding of the Trinity (1991, p. 27); one "Essence" and three Divine "Persons" (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) by which this "Essence" is actualised (ibid., p. 28-29). When it comes to the notion of "otherness," Yannaras writes that: "[...] in the case of God and humanity, essence exists only 'in persons,' and the person is the absolute otherness with regard to the common characteristics of essence" (Yannaras, 2007b, p. 17). In simpler terms, as for the human Persons, so for the Trinitarian ones; each of them is understood as a unique mode in which the Divine Essence is actualised.

Yet, as I noted earlier, Yannaras' analysis goes beyond this ontological description of the Trinity. Like other theologians that I referred to, such as Origen, Maximos, Pannenberg, etc., he focuses quite a lot on the concept of *agape* [love], (ibid., p. 28).

This is precisely where his interpretation of John's "[…] God is love" (e.g.,1 John 4:8) comes into play.

ii. The Ontology of *Agapeic* Freedom

According to Yannaras' Trinitarian theology, *agape* is, above all, an ontological concept. The clarification of this view requires some further analysis of Yannaras' Trinitarian theology. First, one should notice that, as is the case with other Orthodox theologians (at least as early as Gregory of Nanziansum; 1894, p. 307) Yannaras observes that, from the Christian perspective, the Divine is not signified by names (such as "Zeus") but by nouns that imply a "σχέση" [relation] (Yannaras, 2016d, n.p.). As I take it, Yannaras' view could be explained as follows: if someone is asked "Who are you," and their reply is "I am the father," this means that they do not simply respond to the question of who they are. By doing so, they indirectly refer to another Person as well – their son or daughter. To be a father means to be a father *of* someone. The same occurs with the term son, which implies the existence of a parent; one is the son *of* someone.

When it comes to the Trinity, according to Yannaras, names such as Father or Son do not only imply a relationship but, also, a loving relationship. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit love one another; God's "freedom is realised as an experiential mutual perichoresis of the three persons, that is, as a *love* that hypostasises the *being* as an otherness of hypostases" (2015b, p. 315).

However, according to some theological readings, in the case of the Trinity things do not work exactly as they do with humans. One of the major differences has to do with how the idea of "relation" is conceived. This is especially important for my analysis of

Yannaras, because it has a direct effect on the notion of *agape.* In the previous section, I referred to some of the quotes from the Gospel of John which Yannaras himself has used throughout his work. In one of them Jesus says that he and his Father "are one" (John 10.31 as cited in ibid., p. 21). According to some theologians, such passages signify the unique nature of the relation among the Persons of the Trinity.

For instance, Miroslav Volf would probably explain this phrase through the theological term "Perichoresis" (1998, p. 209). According to this idea "in every divine person as a subject, the other persons also indwell; all mutually permeate one another, though in so doing they do not cease to be distinct persons" (ibid., p. 209). Volf's definition seems to be very close to the way in which Yannaras conceives of *Perichoresis*; "In the theological language of the Greek East, 'perichoresis,' or mutual indwelling, is the mode of existence that transcends the ontic atomicity of numbers without impairing the hypostatic otherness of the persons [...]" (Yannaras, 2007b, p. 253).

Also, Volf tells us that the notion of *Perichoresis* shows us that the very relations among the Persons of the Trinity are not the same as they are among human Persons. In Volf's own terms; "A self in this sense, one that through love has become self-less, is indeed a self that can embrace or "enter empathetically" into the other, but it is not a self that can indwell as a self that other. The indwelling of other persons is an exclusive prerogative of God" (ibid., p. 211). Yannaras keeps reminding us that we cannot properly conceive of this *Perichoretic* way of being: "[…] we use the relative, but nevertheless experiential and existential human categories of 'fatherhood,' 'sonship,' and 'procession' to refer to the fundamentally inaccessible mode of divine existence […]" (Yannaras, 2007b, p. 253).

As I take it, Volf's interpretation of *Perichoresis* gives us something that I believe that is perfectly consistent with Yannaras' Trinitarianism; unlike human interpersonal

relations, relations in the Trinity are inherent to the Persons of the Trinity. Or, as Yannaras puts it: "their Existence is drawn from the actualisation of life as communion […]" (1991, p. 36). As early as the 4th century, Gregory of Nanziansum wrote that "nor can you find here any of the qualities of divisible things; but the Godhead is, to speak concisely, undivided in separate Persons" (1894, p. 322). Later thinkers such as John of Damascus described the relation between the Son and the Father by using a metaphor that refers to "fire" which cannot be detached by its "light" (John of Damascus, 1999, p. 180). Equally, he maintained that the Holy Spirit is "not separated" from the Son and the Father (ibid., p. 175). Discussing Catherine LaCugna's trinitarian theology, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen uses a phrase a which is of particular relevance here: "[…] God existing in relations" (2007, p. 184). Yet, probably one of the most characteristic expressions of the idea I discuss is to be found in John Zizioulas' *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. Zizioulas writes that "The substance of God, 'God,' has no ontological content, no true being, apart from communion" (Zizioulas, 2000, p. 17). Before I start explaining this a bit more I shall add that, as it is the case with Zizioulas, who is also an Orthodox personalist thinker, Yannaras' trinitarian theology states exactly the same thing, yet putting emphasis on the *agapeic* (loving) character of this relation. *Agape* is ontological, in the sense that it refers to the mode of existence of God. In his own terms;

> "Holy Scripture assures us that "God is love" (1 John 4.16) It does not tell us that God *has* love, that love is an attribute, a property of God. It assures us that what God *is* is love, that God *is* as love, that the mode by which God *is* is love." (Yannaras, 1991, p. 36)

I suggest that, in Yannaras' case, in order for someone to conceive of these ideas properly, one could compare the Divine substances to the human substances. It is

possible to think of someone who exists, that is, who actualises human essence, and does so *without* loving someone else. If this Person chooses not to apply love to their relationship with another Person, they will remain a human substance – they will not cease to exist as such. Yet, what I think Yannaras tells us, is that this is not the case with the Trinity; here, we do not have some Divine substances (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) that firstly existed as Divine substances and, then, for some reason they started to develop *agapeic* relations. Instead, "the mode by which God *is* is love" (ibid., p. 36).

In other words, love is necessary in order for these Persons to exist as Divine beings. *Agape* loving each other, is what makes the Divine beings divine. However, one should be very careful with terms such as "necessary" here. Divine substances are not like human substances or other beings, especially in Yannaras' case. The very basic difference is that, in this specific theological perspective, human beings (as well as everything else in this world) are created, while God is un-created. This means that the existence of each human being has a beginning, which is when God decides for them to start to exist. Also, being created, no human ever had the opportunity to choose how they want to exist, prior to beginning to exist. In classical Western ontological terms, there was no point in time prior to one's beginning to exist, when one had the opportunity to choose whether they wanted to start actualising the human essence or another essence – such as the flower essence. A human was born human without choosing it, and a flower emerged as a flower without choosing it either. Moreover, not only did a human being not choose to exist in the human mode, but also they did not have any say over what human essence itself would require. For instance, one may think that classical ontology advocates such as Yannaras would tell us that the human essence does not allow individuals to reproduce their species through binary fission, that is, through division, as it happens with amoeba. Instead, in the case of humans,

reproduction requires two organisms. In the terms of classical ontology, this is an essential requirement that no individual has the power to determine — either before or after their own existence. No individual *chooses* that humans must reproduce their species in a way which is radically different from the amoeba way.

To be sure, most of these examples are paradoxical; for instance, how can one choose how to exist without existing prior as "someone" anyway? After all, the choice for existence itself requires an agent to make it. However paradoxical, these examples are useful because they can help us understand what I take to be Yannaras' Trinitarian theology. Yannaras tells us that "God is then existentially free from every necessity of mode of existence […]" (Yannaras, 2011b, p. 51). In my view this challenging formulation invites us to think of all the aforementioned examples in the exact opposite way.

This means that, unlike humans, Divine beings exist without beginning, there was never a point in time when they started to exist. Also, they exist because they *want* to exist and not because of a natural necessity or because someone else created them. Not only do they exist because they want to exist, but they exist in the very mode in which they want to exist; they wish to exist as Divine substances and not as something else: "God is then existentially free from every necessity of mode of existence […]" (Yannaras, 2011b, p. 51). Yet if they want to transform themselves into different beings they can; for instance, according to the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of incarnation, the second person of the Trinity, the Son (Jesus), came down to earth and became human and God at the same time; according to the classical ontological vocabulary, he was actualising both the human and the Divine essence simultaneously. Finally, while no human ever had a say over the characteristics of human essence, *agape* is a *necessary* requirement for a Divine being to be Divine, precisely because each Divine substance

(Father, Son, Holy Spirit) wants it so. To summarise this; the Trinity always existed and still exists because they wanted to do so and still do; they exist in the mode in which they want to exist; they want to exist as Divine beings, and they wish for the Divine essence to require *agape* in order to be actualised; and eventually, *agape* is what makes Divine beings Divine. In my view, this is the best way for someone to conceive of Yannaras' interpretation of John's "God is love." Yannarian *agape* is an ontological *agape.*

iii. *Agapeic* Freedom

So far, I have shown that many Christian theologians thought that the best way for someone to conceive of the phrase "God is love" (e.g. 1 John 4:8) is to interpret it literally. For Yannaras, this literal interpretation is largely associated with Trinitarian theology, that is, the domain of theology that often departs from Jesus' references to three Divine Persons (God, Son, Holy Spirit). I also claimed that Yannaras needs to be classified among these theologians who defend the view that these references imply that Divine beings exist in a relational way, in the sense that they do not exist independently from these relations. As it is the case with other thinkers, Yannaras' emphasis on the idea that these relations are *agapeic* relations, entails a literal interpretation of John's "God is love"; God *is* love, in the sense that the Divine Essence is only actualised through Three persons who love each other. *Agape*, in my analysis of Yannaras, is the necessary precondition for the Divine Beings to be what they are.

In this section, I will show that Yannaras takes a step further with respect to the concept of *agape*. More particularly, the philosopher connects it with the concept of freedom. As I will show later, according to my argument, this connection is particularly important

for someone to understand his political thought too, and thus the type of "citizen" that he advocates for. Yannaras links *agape* and freedom by writing that,

> God is *personal*, with the absolute freedom of existential referential otherness, because he is a *Trinity* of persons – because his freedom is realised as an experiential mutual perichoresis of the three persons, that is, as a *love* that hypostasises the *being* as an otherness of hypostases [...]. (2015b, pp. 314-315)

In my view, the best way for us to conceive of these references properly is to think that both presuppose an idea that I have already touched on: in Yannaras' theology, love is the result of freedom.

In the second chapter, I referred to Yannaras' discussion of Adam and Eve. There, the philosopher wrote that "[…] the realisation of life as communion and relationship is nevertheless a fruit of freedom – there is no necessary or compulsory communion or relationship of love" (1991, p. 77). Yannaras also talked about "the possibility of a different use of freedom" (1991, p. 77). As I noted, one of the things that this passage tells us is that *agape* is the result of a free choice. No-one can compel any Person to become an *agapeic* Person. According to my reading, when Yannaras writes that God "exists, since he loves and love is only an event of freedom" (1991, p. 35), he wants to apply this view to the Trinity too.

Yet, as I pointed to in the previous section, in my reading of Yannaras' trinitarian theology, Divine *agape* does not work in the same way as human *agape.* More particularly, *agape* represents the element that makes Divine beings what they are; "Holy Scripture assures us that 'God is love' (1 John 4.16). It does not tell us that God *has* love, that love is an attribute, a property of God. It assures us that what God *is* is

love, that God *is* as love, that the mode by which God *is* is love" (Yannaras, 1991, p. 36). This suggests that, in the case of the Trinity, when Yannaras tells us that God "exists, since He loves and love is only an event of freedom" (ibid., p. 35), what he really does is to connect *agape* with ontological liberty. In simpler terms, the very fact that God exists as *agape* among three Persons suggests that these Persons *chose* to exist. In the previous section, I argued that the best way for someone to conceive of Yannaras' Trinitarian theology is to think that, unlike human substances, the Persons of the Trinity exist freely. Now, what Yannaras does is slightly different: he tells us that the idea that the Persons of the Trinity exist as *agape* is one of the strongest indications of the fact that the Divine Persons exist because they decide as such. This occurs especially because *agape* is not something that can be enforced; "[…] his freedom is realised as an experiential mutual perichoresis of the three persons, that is, as a *love* that hypostasises the *being* as an otherness of hypostases [...]" (2015b, p. 315). Yannaras invites us to look at the Trinity as a loving community that presupposes freedom, especially *because* it is a loving community. According to Yannaras, *agape* is not merely an ontological concept that refers to the Divine mode of existence; it is also a sign of one of the highest forms of freedom that one could conceive. The philosopher calls this kind of freedom "existential," writing; "With the definition 'God is love,' Christian experience proposes an ontological hermeneutic that in the signifier *love* (*agapē*) summarizes absolute existential freedom (i.e. the being of God)" (Yannaras, 2011b, p. 49).

Yannaras thinks that this type of "existential freedom" (ibid., p. 49) is shown by other events as well. *Agape* is not the only sign for it. For instance, another sign is the very "incarnation of God" (ibid., p. 50). According to this doctrine, at some point in history, the second Person of the Trinity, the Son (Jesus Christ), came to earth and

became a substance that actualised both the human and the Divine essence at the same time. He was both human and Divine at the same time and in all respects, realising what contemporary theology likes to call a *hypostatic union* (e.g. Purves, 2004, p. 79; Bulgakov, 2008, p. 255); two essences (Divine, human) co-existed under the same hypostasis (substance). It is perfectly clear that for Yannaras, this notion is also a sign of freedom, "God is then existentially free from every necessity of mode of existence and can therefore also exist by the mode of human essence or nature (as a perfect human being) without ceasing to be God" (Yannaras, 2011b, p. 51). Yet, as I take it, this is a much more obvious way for someone to think that the Divine substances are free substances. Indeed, assuming that "God is then existentially free from every necessity" (ibid., p. 51) seems to be a direct implication of the idea that God *is capable of* becoming human. What I believe that Yannaras invites us to do is to think about ontological freedom in a way which is not so apparent. This is one of the functions of the notion of *agape.*

In my view, there are two further things that one must infer from Yannaras' conception of Trinitarian, perichoretic *agape.* First, as I noted, I believe that in Yannaras' work there is at least one element that human *agape* shares with the Trinitarian *agape*: they both require freedom. Yet, I believe that in order for someone to advance their understanding of Yannaras' perspective, they must think that, despite this similarity, we still do not really know much about how Trinitarian *agape* works. In other words, I believe that the fact that Yannaras implies that there are some similarities between the two *agape*-loves must not be interpreted as an indication that he believes that these two loves are entirely the same. More particularly, while a human-*agapist* should enjoy the right to tell us that she knows something about human-*agape* especially because she practices it, the Divine *agape* must be left alone, since it remains

beyond reach. The basic reason why I think that this is correct is because we must always remember that Yannaras is an apophatic theologian. In my view, even when he describes Divine *agape* with terms that bring it close to human *agape* (e.g. they both require freedom) we must still think that he believes that there is no "[...] possibility of any human apprehension of a form of existence that escapes the presupposition with which human experience understands existence" (Yannaras, 2005a, p. 63). In simpler terms, the best way for someone to interpret Yannaras' theological position is to assume that humans do not know much about what it means for the Father to love the Son or the Spirit. This specific type of *agapeic* relation remains unknown to humans, which is why I insist that the notion of freedom must not confuse us here; Yannaras uses it by declaring a mere similarity between the two *agape*-loves. He is far from referring to an identity.

The second element that I believe that one should extract from Yannaras' Trinitarian theology is the idea that everything that the Divine Persons choose to do must be conceived of as the result of their freedom. Since they are not even bound by their own Essence, no-one and nothing can force them to do or to be what they do not freely choose to do or to be. Equally, no-one and nothing can prevent them from doing or being what they do not want to do or to be. More importantly, I think that this freedom is also revealed in their relationships with one another.

Take for instance the passage where Yannaras describes Jesus' prayer to his Father, which I also mentioned in Chapter 2. As I showed, Yannaras tells us that Jesus prays to his Father, asking to avoid his arrest and crucifixion (Matthew 26: 38-43 as cited in Yannaras, 2016 p. 37). Yannaras tells us that Jesus feels "πανικό" [panic] (ibid., p. 37) and "τρόμο" [terror] (ibid., p. 37). However, the author reminds us that Jesus finally agrees to execute the plan of the Father (ibid., p. 40). Also, he writes that Jesus' prayer

signifies a type of "αὐτοπαράδοση" [self-surrender] (ibid., p. 40) which is "ἐλεύθερη, δηλαδὴ ἐρωτικὴ" [free, that is, loving] (ibid., p. 40). One would not err if one thought that at least one of the messages that Yannaras wants to convey here, is that Jesus chooses freely to says yes to his Father. The reason is because he loves his Father. Hence, in my reading of Yannaras' perspective, the Son is not forced to proceed. He proceeds because he loves.

Another reason why I think that Yannaras agrees with this type of freedom, is because this freedom is linked to the Dostoevskian concept of the "miracle" (Dostoevsky, 2004, p. 256). The "miracle" is mentioned by the Grand Inquisitor, a Dostoevskian character that, as Petrà has it, "accompanies Yannaras' whole theological history" (2019, p. 18, see note 11). In Dostoyevsky's novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, the Grand Inquisitor says to Jesus:

> You did not come down from the cross when they shouted to you, mocking and reviling you: "Come down from the cross and we will believe that it is you." You did not come down because, again, you did not want to enslave man by a miracle and thirsted for faith that is free, not miraculous. You thirsted for love that is free, and not for the servile raptures of a slave before a power that has left him permanently terrified. (Dostoevsky, 2004, p. 256)

When Yannaras uses this novel, he often addresses something slightly different than what I clarify here. He describes the "*miracle*" as the "[...] supernatural event, that which manifestly goes against the law of nature and obliges us to submit to the power and authority of the miracle-working agent (whether person or institution)" (Yannaras, 2013, p. 14). In other words, he tells us that the "miracle" can be among the "factors"

that may lead us to put "ourselves in an incontrovertibly submissive position" (ibid., p. 14). In his own terms, "The thaumaturgic power has to be accepted" (ibid., p. 15).

Yet, I believe that when Yannaras emphasises the notion of the Dostoevskian "miracle," what he certainly takes for granted is that this "miracle" is possible. According to my reading, we must think that he would agree with Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor, with the idea that the Son was *free* to come down from the Cross, but he did not do so. The reason why the Son did not perform such a "miracle" had nothing to do with his liberty. Yannaras would probably argue that what really mattered in this case, was not for humans to believe in God by putting themselves "in an incontrovertibly submissive position" (ibid., p. 14). Instead, God wanted them to show "[…] faith, if faith means the arduous attainment of trust" (ibid., p. 15).

However, what is particularly important for my own analysis is that the Dostoevskian image shows us that the Son *freely* accepts the plan of the Father; the Son who remains on the cross is the Son who acts freely even during these very intense moments of his life. He can leave the Cross, but he waits until He dies. As W. Shawn McKnight puts, commenting on John's 10:17-18: "Jesus' authority is revealed in his freedom to lay down his own life; it is not so much power over others but freedom from coercion. In his authority to lay down his life and to take it up again, Jesus has the freedom to love his sheep" (2018, p. 91). Even during the slow death of the Son, the relationship between the Father and the Son remains a relationship between two free Persons. No-one forces the other to do or to be what they do not freely choose to do or to be; equally no-one prevents the other from doing or being what they do not freely choose to do or to be. In my view, Yannaras' Trinitarian theology invites us to imagine Three Persons that respect the ontological liberty of one another. Or according to my own formulation, no Person of the Trinity forces another Person to do or to be what they do not freely

chose to do or to be. And no Person of the Trinity prevents another Person of the Trinity from doing or becoming what they do not freely chose to do or to become. Instead, they participate in relations of absolute *agape* and freedom. I believe that John Corie puts it very nicely when he writes that "the structure of authority within the Trinity is based on 'power for' not 'power over' each of the other Persons within the Godhead. It is not authority imposed or demanded by the Father, it is accepted freely within the mutual relationship of love and service that constitutes the Trinity" (Corrie, 1989, p. 44).

iv. The Politics of the Trinity

The basic reason why my analysis of Yannaras' Trinitarian theology is required is that his political philosophy is founded upon the notion of the Trinity. More particularly, Yannaras needs to be categorised among the thinkers who suggest that the Christian concept of the Trinity has a political dimension (other examples would be Parker, T.D., 1980; Corrie 1989; Moltmann, 1993; Deetlefs, 2019). In his *A note to Political Theology* Yannaras confirms his commitment to this dimension, by using a quote which he attributes to Nikolai Fyodorovich Fyodorov, a 19th century Christian intellectual: "The political theory of the Church is the truth of the Holy Trinity" (Yannaras, 1983 p. 55). Andreas Andreopoulos observes that "the political dimension in the works of Yannaras is generally dedicated to an exploration of communal (co)existence, which finds its fuller expression within a theological context rather than within the limits of political science" (Andreopoulos, 2019, p. 183). I believe that Andreopoulos' point about Yannaras' political theory can be very well summarised by the term "Christian

communitarianism" – a term that Slavov Atanas employs while describing Yannaras' politics (Atanas, 2016 p. 135).

Understanding Yannaras' political theory is not a particularly easy task. In my view, one of the difficulties is caused by what Skliris calls the "fusion between the polis and the Ecclesia in the thought of Christos Yannaras" (2018, p. 45). This means that, according to the philosopher, the Church must be conceived of as a *political* community; or, as Mitralexis puts it in his analysis of Yannaras' position, the Church itself is already "*political*" anyway (Mitralexis, 2019, p. 321). Atanas' reading of the Greek philosopher appears to be very similar to Mitralexis': "The true polis and politics […] need to be found on the 'power of love' and the communion of people. The Church has to be understood in terms of being both a city of divine-human interaction as well as a community of persons" (2016, p. 135). One could think that such a claim seems to sit well with very inclusive definitions of the political. For instance, Hanna Fenichel Pitkin argues that "political life" represents "the activity through which relatively large and permanent groups of people determine what they will collectively do, settle how they will live together, and decide their future, to whatever extent that is within human power" (1981, p. 343). It seems that the only difference is that, while Pitkin refers to "relatively large and permanent groups of people" (ibid., p. 343), a Church community can be also a small one.

According to Grigoropoulou, in the context of Yannaras' work, "the Church is clearly not an institution. It is the 'ecclesial event', as he often refers to it and by which description he alludes to the experience of gathering together and of being and remaining united with one another" (2008, p. 197). Hence, in order for someone to understand the Yannarian conception of the term "Church" properly, one should depart from the ancient Greek word "ἐκκλησία" (ecclesia). In Ancient Greek "ἐκκλησία"

meant “assembly.” Scholars like Pavlo Smytsnyuk (2021, p. 109-110) or Miroljub Gligorić (2021, p. 270), refer to the connections that Yannaras sees between the Ancient Greek “polis” (Gligorić, 2021, p. 270), and the Christian church; both, for Yannaras, are described by the very same term (“ecclesia”) and, thus, both need to be understood as forms of gathering. As Gligorić tells us; “According to Yannaras, the ecclesial community was the successor of the polis, but at the same time it manifested some differences from the prototype” (2021, p. 270). Smytsnyuk writes that Yannaras “emphasises that the adoption of the Greek term *ekklēsia*, which in the ancient world belonged to the domain of politics, not religion, was meant to point to the uniqueness of Christianity and indicate that it is a way of life” (2021, p. 109-110). In simpler terms, one must think that, according to Yannaras, already from its early years, the Christian Church was a community aiming to imitate the life of the Trinity (Yannaras, 2019, p. 77); but also a community that bears a “*political*” dimension (Mitralexis, 2019, p. 321). In his criticism against the philosopher’s political theory, Atanas writes, again very nicely: “in his understanding of a Christian political theology, Yannaras emphasises both the importance of communion and participation modelled after the relations between divine persons in the Holy Trinity” (Atanas, 2016, p. 136).

Hence, on the one hand, Yannaras’ political theory presupposes that the ecclesial community must be understood as a political community that strives to imitate the life of the Holy Trinity. At the same time, however, Yannaras’ communitarianism goes beyond this specific idea. As the secondary literature reminds us, Yannaras is interested in the communities existing during the Byzantine era (Mitralexis, 2019, p. 326; Payne, 2006, p. 484-485; Gligorić, 2021, p. 269-270; Skliris, 2019, p. 334). Payne writes that “Yannaras seeks to retrieve the Byzantine autonomous communities that developed toward the end of the Ottoman Empire. The life of these communities was centered

around the life of the Church or monastery found in its midst" (2006, pp. 484-485). Although I think that he is right that Yannaras is inspired by the Christian and "autonomous" character of these communities, I would not go as far as to argue that he wants to re-create these communities faithfully, if this is what Payne means. What I believe that we should keep from Payne's comments, is that in Yannaras' political community, the Church plays a *central* role.

In my view, the best way to conceive of Yannaras' political theory based on these two different ideas is to assume that the author envisions a small, self-governed community, the members of which try to imitate the mode of existence of the Trinity; in this context, each member of the community engages in the struggle to live with others by loving them. Also, we must draw the conclusion that each member of this particular community participates in the Church gatherings. In simpler terms, we are referring to an *agapeic* community.

One of the difficulties of Yannaras' political philosophy is that Yannaras does not give us a very detailed analysis of how this political community that aims at the Trinity should function. To make things more complicated, I think that it is quite difficult for someone to imagine how such a community could exist today. Hence, at least according to my reading of his political thought, his politics presupposes a fundamental transformation of the world as we know it today in liberal societies. In other words, if one follows Jonathan Pugh's description of "radical politics" as politics that "turns over, or 'roots out,' and redefines how society functions" (Pugh, 2009, p. 2); one could argue that Yannaras must be conceived of as a radical political thinker. In this thesis, I will attempt to offer an overview of his radical political philosophy, based on my interpretation of various elements of his work.

Before I move on with the next section where I provide my own interpretation of this communitarian theory, it is important to note that this particular community needs to be viewed as the "ideal" political community. By the term "ideal", I refer to a political community that, according to my interpretation of Yannaras, must serve as a model for all humans. According to my interpretation, being Christian himself, one must assume that Yannaras thinks that every human should participate in such small, *agapeic* communities. Yet, it is one thing for someone to believe that everybody should lead this Christian way of life, and it is certainly quite another for someone to try to compel — or even to encourage or preach to somebody to become a Christian. I believe that Yannaras' theology rejects all such cases for reasons that go beyond the scope of my analysis. As I read it, therefore, Yannaras' political philosophy does not intend to describe an already existing model, nor to faithfully reproduce a past one. Instead, I think that we could very easily conceive of him as a normative and radical political thinker who refers to the future, suggesting a political model that should apply to all humans.

Also, another comment on the term "ideal" is essential in my analysis. The "ideal" political community is simply the community that strives to imitate the Trinity. In this context, "ideal" does *not* mean perfect. Instead, it is only the Trinity which is a perfect community, the community in which each Person co-exists with the other Persons in perfect love, freedom and harmony.

In my view, although Yannaras' political philosophy can be accused of being idealistic for different reasons (see a relevant comment in Atanas, 2016, p. 136), we have many reasons to assume that Yannaras does not expect human Persons to achieve the perfect mode of co-existence that the Trinity enjoys. This is probably why in his *Recta Ratio and Social Practice*, the philosopher reminds us that humans are not perfect, and that

human “αποτυχία” [failure] (2006c, p. 318) should be understood as an inevitable part of politics. He rejects terms such as the “ἰδανικοῦ πολίτη” [ideal citizen] or the “τέλειου ἀνθρώπου” [perfect human] (ibid., p. 318). According to his view, humans fail all the time in various cases. Thus, in his own conception, politics need to be understood as a collective “ἄθλημα” [endeavor] (Yannaras, Orthos Logos, p. 317), that is, as a process in which humans co-operate towards a specific goal. Although in this particular book Yannaras does not refer directly to the idea of the Trinity, I believe that this view applies to what I described as Yannaras’ Trinitarian politics too; in my opinion, his political community consists of people who try to co-exist in an *agapeic* mode, although they know that the perfect, Trinitarian mode of co-existence remains beyond reach.

In similar contexts, Trinitarian theologians such as Miroslav Volf write that the application of the Trinity to the “human community” cannot but come with some “limits” (Volf, 1998, p. 405). Volf contends that “since the lives of human beings are inescapably marred by sin and saddled with transitoriness, in history human beings cannot be made into the perfect creaturely images of the Triune God which they are eschatologically destined to become” (ibid., p. 405). One could, therefore, point out that Yannaras would agree with Volf by acknowledging the imperfection of humans. As I take it, this must be among the reasons why in his *Recta Ratio and Social Practice,* his political philosophy leaves plenty of space for the citizens to try, to fail, to acknowledge their “αποτυχία” [failure] (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 318), and to try again. Trinity is the aim. The journey towards achieving it is an entirely different story.

v. The Citizen as a Critical *Agapist*: Introducing the Yannarian Link Between A*gape* and Critical Thought

As I already mentioned, according to my reading, one of the central tasks of the citizens of Yannaras' community is to love one another. Hence, I completely side with the people in the secondary literature who view love as a virtue to be pursued in the context of Yannaras' politics. According to Atanas' analysis of Yannaras' position "The true polis and politics […] need to be found on the 'power of love' and the communion of people" (Atanas, 2016, p.135). Gounopoulos notes that "If 'freedom of relationship' refers to a life of trust in God and love for each other inside the polis, then this experience sums up the political theology of Christos Yannaras" (Gounopoulos, 2018, p. 79). Similarly, Cole tells us that love and freedom "are central concepts in Yannaras' theology and in his political theology" but also "integral elements in a functioning, authentic community modeled on the Trinity" (Cole, 2019, p. 302). In my view, all these descriptions are correct, and they help us understand Yannaras' political thought better. According to the formulation I will adopt from now on, Yannaras' political philosophy includes an "*agapeic* citizen."

Yet, in my view, Yannaras' work allows us to go deeper with respect to his *agapeic* citizen. Merely acknowledging that this citizen should love others in the form of *agape* is only one aspect of the whole story. The analysis of this notion is particularly important for my thesis, especially because the concept of the "citizen" is a central notion of Yannaras' educational thought too.

More particularly, I believe that a good way to conceive of Yannaras' *agapeic* citizen properly is to think through a very specific interpretation of the concept of *agape* that that one finds throughout Yannaras' work. While clarifying this view, I will show that *agape* is linked to the concept of "critical thought", but also to the imperfect nature of

the citizens who are required to imitate the Trinity; the ones who, in Volf's formulation, "are inescapably marred by sin and saddled with transitoriness" (Volf, 1998, p. 405). It is important to emphasise again that this is *my reading* of Yannaras' work and refers to what I personally think one must infer from his ideas. It is an interpretation that, even though I strongly believe it is correct, has not been explicitly stated by Yannaras himself nor has it been suggested by people in secondary literature who write on Yannaras' political thought. I will now turn to explain this in detail.

In my view, Yannaras' commitment to the idea that citizens are imperfect beings affects the very way in which he understands *agape* between humans. *Agape*, in this perspective, is a critical process, in the sense that it requires critical thought. I believe that when it comes to Yannaras' work, the link between *agape* and critical thought is to be found in a reference to the self-sacrificial aspect of *agape.*

We know for a fact that self-sacrifice is usually considered to be part of Christian *agape* (see a nice discussion in Dych, 1995, p. 37). To be sure, as some philosophical discussions have shown, the topic of *agapeic* self-sacrifice is quite complicated. For instance, thinkers like Edmund Santurri remind us that, for some people, it "cannot be reduced to self-sacrifice simpliciter", and, thus "agape judges some self-sacrifice inappropriate" (Santurri, 2016, p. 181). In my reading, we have good grounds to believe that Yannaras would certainly agree with this idea.

In a recently translated book, entitled *The Effable and the Ineffable: The Linguistic Boundaries of Metaphysical Realism*, Yannaras quotes Paul's letter to Corinthians that refers to *agape*, writing that, "Even acts of supreme self-sacrifice are capable of serving an inflated super-ego" (Yannaras, 2021a, 1.3.1). In my view, this passage is one of the finest indications of the fact that Yannaras belongs to the category of people mentioned by Santurri; that is, the ones who think that not all types of "self-sacrifice" are *agapeic*.

Some may even claim that, by using the term "supreme self-sacrifice," Yannaras implies that if someone identifies *agape* with self-sacrifice, they may become the victim of a much more serious misconception; they may think that the greater the personal cost of the self-sacrificial act, the greater the *agape.* Although I tend to think that this is a plausible explanation, in my view, what is even more important in Yannaras' passage, is that it directs our attention towards the notion of "egocentrism."

Therefore, according to my suggestion, one must infer that Yannaras addresses a very specific aspect of self-sacrificial *agape*. More particularly, I believe that he invites us to think about the very *motivation* behind the self-sacrificial act, presupposing that this motivation must not be an egocentric one in order for the act to be *agapeic*. Recall that in the previous chapter, where I discussed the concept of "egocentrism," I argued that, when it comes to Yannaras' work, this notion must be understood in its theological dimension. In my view, egocentrism represents one's refusal to trust their life to God's hands and to actively pursue the will of God. My claim here is that this conception of egocentrism affects the very mode in which Yannaras understands self-sacrificial *agape.* A good way to show this is by using an example that refers to an egocentric motivation.

One could imagine someone who pursues an altruistic, self-sacrificial act, not because they care about others, but because they want to show off. In my view, this example is certainly compatible with some conceptions of pride. Gabriele Taylor makes a valuable categorisation, providing us with three forms of pride: "vanity, conceit, and arrogance" (Taylor, 2006, p. 71). Taylor describes "the vain" (ibid., p. 72) by referring to heroes found in the works of Charles Dickens and George Eliot. More particularly, these people "[...] are concerned above all with the picture they present to the world; they offer their appearance as a means of attracting praise and applause, which they in turn

can respond to with heightened self-esteem" (ibid., p. 72). The "conceited" (ibid., p. 73) are not entirely the same, in the sense that they "[...] look at another precisely in order to find in her inferiority confirmation of their own superiority" (ibid., p. 74). Thus, for Taylor "while the vain need others to reflect a flattering image of themselves, the conceited use them as that against which their own superiority may be measured" (ibid., p.73). The arrogant ones "see themselves as being on a different plane, as being superior and unique" (ibid., p. 74-75), and thus they do not seek "any such support from others" (ibid., p. 74).

It seems to me that, from these three categories of pride, the most suitable for the person of our example is the "vanity" one. In this perspective, the person of our example is motivated by their desire to receive "praise and applause" (ibid., p. 72). Yet, one must certainly think that this desire to show off is entirely incompatible with the will of God. This is precisely why this motivation can be called "egocentric" from Yannaras' point of view. Probably one of the clearest indications that God is against vanity-pride is to be found in Matthew's Gospel where Jesus refers to "fast." Fasting, in this case, must not be made evident to other people, it must be done "in secret" (Matthew, 6:18).

To summarise some key points so far; according to my reading of Yannaras, sometimes self-sacrificial acts depart from egocentric motivations. An egocentric motivation is a motivation that goes against the will of God (e.g. pride). This suggests that, for Yannaras, a self-sacrificial act that departs from an egocentric motivation must not be understood as an *agapeic* act. Hence, I think that we should keep this point in mind when we think about Yannaras' *agapeic* citizen. In my view, there is a second point that needs to be made with respect to self-sacrificial *agape*. More specifically, this point has to do with the relation between *agape* and critical thought. In what remains of this section, I will elaborate on it.

According to my reading, by writing that "even acts of supreme self-sacrifice are capable of serving an inflated super-ego" (2021a, 1.3.1, p. 2), Yannaras tells us that appearances can be deceptive, as the famous saying has it. This is precisely why critical reflection is needed when it comes to self-sacrificial acts. More specifically, this suggests that on the one hand, humans must avoid being trapped in the illusion that, just because they sacrifice themselves for others, they have fulfilled Jesus' standards for self-sacrificial *agape*. On the other hand, humans are imperfect, sinful beings, and at the same time, complicated beings. This means that sometimes they may act out of egocentric motivations that are not always easy to be detected. In an entirely different context, Jane Orton offers us an idea which is very relevant to this discussion; she reminds us that "actions do not always have clear and easily reached motives" (2000, p. 157). This is where the second point I intend to make comes into the game. More specifically, I believe that Yannaras should be understood as someone who indirectly invites Christians to critically reflect on their very motivations, when they pursue self-sacrificial acts. *Agape*, in my interpretation of Yannaras' position, is something that must involve critical reflection. To love in the style of *agape* is not merely to feel or to do something, but it is also to think, to judge, to assess.

From this standpoint, we must think that Yannarian citizens are not merely imperfect citizens who try to imitate the perfect model of the Trinity by loving one another. My addition is that, in Yannaras' case, humans are also complicated beings, which is why this very specific conception of *agape* as a critical process is required. Citizens should attempt to practice *agape* because this is what it means to imitate the Trinity. Yet, they must do so in a cautious way because *agape* is challenging. Any self-sacrificial act should be subject to critical assessment and questioning; Is this act *agapeic*? Which means: Does it depart from a selfless motivation? Yannaras' citizens are citizens who

must be able to think critically, especially because they want to practice *agape* in their lives.

Although I believe that this interpretation of Yannaras' work gives us an important link between *agape* and critical thought, I would not go as far as to argue that Yannaras tells us that critical thought is a *necessary precondition* for *agape.* In fact, I think that such a claim could be very easily contested. A possible (and reasonable) reaction against it would be that critical thought is not *necessary* for agape itself, because one can love self-sacrificially and in a non-egocentric way, even when they do not reflect on their motivations. Thus, they may sacrifice themselves for others out of non-egocentric motivations, and the only difference is that they do not go back to check the nature of these motivations. Critical thought is necessary only for someone who wishes to *test* their motivations, not for someone who wants to love.

Even though this is correct, I believe that we have two reasons to think that, if not necessary, critical reflection is at least very useful and important for practicing *agape*. First, one of the reasons may be the complicated nature of the motivations themselves. As I pointed out, this complexity is finely summarised by Jane Orton's phrase, according to which "actions do not always have clear and easily reached motives" (2000, p. 157). Thus, one may assume that, if self-sacrificial *agape* requires acts that begin by non-egocentric motivations, and if it is not always easy to identify a motivation behind a certain action, then critical reflection is at least a very important and useful part of the *agapeic* process. As I take it, this reading entails that the Yannarian citizen should know that it is not always easy to identify the nature of one's motivations, which is precisely why critical thought is valuable.

Yet, there is another reason why I think that Yannaras implies that critical thought is important for *agape.* This reason is much more theological and is linked to the Christian

tradition from which Yannaras draws. More specifically, one must keep in mind that the Orthodox Christian spirituality highly values the idea that Christians must be very careful with their thoughts and actions, because egocentrism can be very deceiving. This is particularly evident in the case of pride. In the Scriptures we read stories about entirely misled people who thought that their lives were in accordance with the will of God. Yet, contrary to what they thought about themselves, Jesus used them as an example for the exact opposite. Such is the case of the Pharisee parable, found in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 18: 11-12). One of the (many) functions of parables like this is to show that, in the life that Jesus calls his followers to live, it is *very easy* for someone to think that they are getting it right, while, in fact, they fail.

This is finely suggested by an interpretation of the parable, found in St. John Climacus' *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (John Climacus, 1982), one of the classic texts of Orthodox Christian monasticism. Using the Pharisee as an example, John suggests that pride is a vice that can deceive humans. This is the case because it does not directly invite them to turn themselves against God (ibid., p. 207). In John's formulation; "it does not shamelessly urge us to renounce God" (ibid., p. 207). Instead, John conceives of the Pharisee as a proud person whose pride comes with gratefulness (ibid., p. 207), and he is right about this. Throughout the parable, the Pharisee appears to pray, uttering words of gratefulness for his moral perfection (Luke 18:11). In simpler terms, as I take it, John teaches his readers that the battle against pride is not easy. It requires one's ability to be vigilant in case pride hides itself behind a seemingly virtuous behaviour (e.g. one's being openly grateful to God). The Pharisee was deceived because he was too concentrated on his prayer without noticing that he was committing an act of pride. One's being grateful to God because one thinks that they are superior to their sinful brother, is not exactly the type of prayer that God asks humans to practice.

John of Climacus' interpretation of the Pharisee's parable is merely an example of the general strategy that Orthodox Christian spirituality uses against things such as pride. Other people such as Monk Paisios of Mount Athos use terms that illustrate the challenging nature of this vice. For instance, he writes about "κρυφή υπερηφάνεια" [hidden pride][25] (Paisios, 2010, p. 34). Although these ideas do not refer to the concept of motivations that I discuss here, I think that they help us understand Yannaras' ideas better, by situating them in the tradition where they belong. In my analysis, when Yannaras writes that "even acts of supreme self-sacrifice are capable of serving an inflated super-ego" (Yannaras, 2021a, 1.3.1), he does not make an ethical claim that comes out of the blue. We must think that he is based on a tradition that highly values the idea that the seeds of egocentrism are not always easy to identify. This is precisely why I believe that my own reading about the relationship between *agape* and critical thought in Yannaras' work is justified. If self-sacrificial *agape* requires the avoidance of egocentrism (for Yannaras); and if some forms of egocentrism (such as pride) can be quite difficult to detect (according to the Orthodox tradition); then, critical reflection is a crucial tool for the *agapist*. In my view, Yannaras' *agapeic* citizens are asked to practice *agape* in this cautious, critical way. From now on, I will call this particular idea: "the Yannarian link between *agape* and critical thought."

vi. The "Ecclesial Anarchism"

So far, we have seen that Yannaras' citizen must be conceived of as a member of a political community that aims at imitating the Holy Trinity. This theological detail

[25] My translation.

helps us to understand the metaphysical foundation for this community. Also, as I will show later, I think that this detail is crucial for a proper interpretation of Yannaras' political freedom. However, the idea of the Trinity alone does not give us much insight into the nature of politics that, in my view, Yannaras envisions. Since I believe that the clarification of the political is important for someone who aims at conceiving of Yannaras' notion of the "citizen" properly, I will now turn to offer my analysis and interpretation of the communitarian politics that this citizen is part of.

As we read in his *Recta Ratio and Social Practice*, Yannaras' communitarianism presupposes something like a "κεντρικής εξουσίας" [central government], the role of which is to support independent communities (Yannaras, 2006c p. 292). As Gligorić explains in commenting on this book, the central government "should intervene only if it is necessary and the intervention should take place only if it does not violate the self-governing principle of the communities" (Gligorić, 2021, p. 271). Also, in this book Yannaras advocates what he calls "ἄμεση δημοκρατία", which can be translated as "direct democracy"[26] (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 285, 291). This form of "direct democracy" entails the "συμμετοχή όλων των ενηλίκων μελών της κοινωνικής ομάδας στη λήψη των αποφάσεων" [participation of every adult member of the community in the decision-making process] (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 286).

It is very difficult for someone to reach a conclusion about the nature of this "λήψη των αποφάσεων" [decision-making process][27] (ibid., p. 286) from this specific book. In my view, one must turn to some other writings of Yannaras too. For instance, in an article published in *Kathimerini* newspaper, entitled "*Η δημοκρατία δεν είναι συνταγή*" [Democracy is not a formula],[28] Yannaras criticises the "πλειοψηφία [majority rule]"

[26] From now on I will use the English term
[27] From now on I will use the English translation
[28] My translation from Greek. The same applies to all quotes used.

(2017a, n.p.), common to "νεωτερικής δημοκρατίας [modern democracy]" (ibid., n.p.). The philosopher argues that "ποσοτικό μέγεθος [quantity]" (ibid., n.p.) is not always accompanied by what he would prefer in politics, that is, "ποιότητα [quality]" (ibid., n.p.). Moreover, Yannaras writes that in the context of "modern democracy," politicians often aim at the "κολάκευμα της μάζας [flattering of the masses]" (ibid., n.p.) in order to gain support and secure their political positions. On the other hand, according to Yannaras, we must not entrust power exclusively to some "άριστους [noble]" people (ibid., n.p.), because history has shown that this will likely lead to authoritarian politics (ibid., n.p.). In simpler terms, combining the two works one could reach the following conclusion: Yannaras is a political philosopher who favors direct democracy, while at the same time, he does not feel comfortable with liberal democratic practices, such as the majority rule. What, therefore, is the best way to conceive of his communitarianism? How does the "decision-making process" (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 286) of his community operate?

In my view, we must think that Yannaras' community does not decide based on the majority rule. Also, I wish to take my argument a step further: Specifically, the clarification of this collective way of deciding about the community, requires the discussion of some concepts from Yannaras' epistemological thought. One such a concept is "critical ontology" or, as Skliris has it, "the communitarian version that critical ontology takes in the thought of Christos Yannaras […]" (2018, p. 38). To be sure, it is difficult to analyse this concept here in detail. Hence it is useful to note that according to this specific concept, "truth is verified and falsified in a communal way […]" (ibid., p. 38). The seeds of this notion Yannaras detects in Heraclitus, writing that: "Attestation, opinion, information are true when they provoke and form rational relations of common co-understanding, when they coordinate (harmonise) particular

(individual) experiences, when they allow the experience to be held in common" (Yannaras in Petrà, 2019, p. 98). Interestingly, in his critical reading of Yannaras' "critical ontology," Skliris does not hesitate to use examples that one could very easily associate with politics: "Let's give some well-discussed examples: what happens when a community regards slavery as a natural event and builds around it the net of relations that constitute its truth?" (Skliris, 2018, p. 40).

In my view, understanding the "decision-making process" (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 286) in the context of Yannarian communitarianism requires us to imitate Skliris' strategy. Like Skliris, I will also apply Yannaras' epistemology to politics. More particularly, I believe that Yannaras' political thought is deeply and inextricably linked to his epistemology. According to my interpretation, Yannaras' communitarianism requires what the author calls "[…] that which all hold in common (pantes homodoxousin) as a common opinion (doxa-gnomē) and to which each (from his own individual experience) testifies (epimartyrei)" (Yannaras in Petrà, 2019, p. 98). In other words, according to my interpretation, having rejected the majority rule, the citizens of Yannaras' political community are asked to do two distinct things: A) They use their critical skills in order to engage in dialogue with each other ("Rational method and techniques of demonstrative proof function as presuppositions of thinking correctly, which serves and assures communicating correctly" (ibid., p. 99)); and, through this dialogical process, they try to find a *common* decision about the community. In other words, I suggest that Yannaras' political community operates based on a certain type of unanimity.

As is true with other types of political unanimity (see for instance Wolff, 1998, p. 24), the unanimity I suggest here does not necessarily imply that all citizens agree wholeheartedly with all decisions. One could even argue that a significant disagreement

may prevent the members from reaching any decision whatsoever. In my view, in such a case, the citizens must face the consequences of not reaching a decision. Failure to find some common ground is part of the process. According to my interpretation, a proper Yannarian approach to politics presupposes that relations always come first; as he puts it in another context, to engage in a "relation" is to take a "risk" (2021a, 2.2.2., p. 182). In other words, relations may even fail to generate a common decision, and one may think that Yannaras' *agapeic* citizens can learn an important lesson from such a failure; *agapeic* relations often require us to compromise, especially when common life is at stake. This is why what I call "unanimity" in this context does not necessarily presuppose a community of people who always agree. It applies to Persons who attempt to live by loving others, and the very practice of *agape* may (and sometimes *must*) lead them to give their consent to a decision that, from their point of view, needs to be significantly improved. To be sure, as I will also explain later, this interpretation of Yannaras' work must not be understood as distinct from his conception of inner freedom, which I discussed in Chapter 2. In other words, it applies to the community of citizens who try to live in accordance with the will of God; the community who aims at imitating the Trinity. Yannaras' *Recta Ratio and Social Practice* is not a book that refers to the Trinity per se. Yet, I believe that the ideas expressed in this book (e.g. participation, direct democracy) must certainly be understood as an essential part of my description of Yannaras' Trinitarian politics. In other words, I strongly believe that it would be a mistake for someone to disconnect these references from Yannaras' political theology.

Departing from this approach, one could claim that Yannaras can be categorised among other Christian political theorists who think that the Trinity should be linked

with politics that value community and participation. For instance, Leonardo Boff expresses a similar view when he writes that:

> The sort of society that would emerge from inspiration by the trinitarian model would be one of fellowship, equality or opportunity, generosity in the space available for personal and group expression. Only a society of sisters and brothers whose social fabric is woven out of participation and communion of all in everything can justifiably claim to be an image and likeness (albeit pale) of the Trinity, the foundation and final resting place of the universe." (1988, p. 306)

Jonathan Cole went a few steps further, by comparing Yannaras' political trinitarianism with some contemporary analyses of the political implications of the Trinity (e.g. 2021, p. 7). In my work, however, I would like to make a claim about Yannaras' political trinitarianism that goes well beyond the secondary literature discussions on Yannaras' political theory. More particularly, I wish to argue that Yannaras' trinitarian, political philosophy is essentially a form of anarchist political philosophy.

To be sure, by proposing this way of reading Yannaras, I do not imply that the philosopher presents himself as an anarchist thinker. Instead, some scholars might think that he would reject this label, given that, in his *The Inhumanity of Right*, one will find a criticism against political anarchism. Yet, from my point of view, this criticism is *not* a sufficient reason for someone to abandon the anarchist interpretation I suggest here. Apart from not being particularly precise, this particular criticism seems to target only a very specific aspect of anarchism. For instance, Yannaras accuses anarchism and socialism of bringing "a new individualism that emerged from the common ownership of property and the common administration of authority (distributing benefits on the

basis of work)" (Yannaras, 2021b, p. 127). In other words, it appears that Yannaras' problem is that anarchism should have been even more communitarian and communal than it is: "What was of primary interest was not the realisation of relations of communion, but the freeing of the individual from the limitations imposed by alien proprietorial interests and the state authority that supports them" (ibid., p. 127).

Despite the fact that Yannaras offers this very brief (and rather superficial) criticism of anarchism, in another work, entitled *The Freedom of Morality*, he does not hesitate to write that "the ecclesial ethos looks like a kind of 'anarchist theory'[…]" (1984, p. 269). More particularly, he writes that,

> We live in a world where […) the individual intellect is the strongest weapon for survival, and individual preference the only criterion for happiness. In such a world, the witness of the ecclesial ethos looks like a kind of 'anarchist theory' [...] in the way it concentrates the universality of life once again in the sphere of personal freedom, and personal freedom in asceticism of bodily self-denial. (ibid., p. 269)

To be sure, one must not overlook that this passage contains a very loose use of the term "anarchist." In other words, Yannaras tries to convey the message that the "ecclesial ethos" is radically *different* from the contemporary, secular way of life. Hence, this reference alone is not sufficient to prove that Yannaras' work contains an anarchist-friendly political theory. However, despite this rather loose treatment of the term "anarchist" and his criticism against political anarchism, I believe that one must not hesitate to argue that Yannaras' political philosophy shares many common features with some anarchist theories. Take, for instance, the majority rule. Yannaras' criticism

is certainly reminiscent of the work of anarchist theorists such as Errico Malatesta (2015 p. 63). Malatesta focuses on the notion of freedom, writing that: "In any case it is not a question of being right or wrong; it is a question of freedom, freedom for all, freedom for each individual so long as he does not violate the equal freedom of others (Malatesta, 2015 p.63)." Similar to Yannaras, Malatesta rejects both sides of the coin: "But if we do not for one moment recognise the right of majorities to dominate minorities, we are even more opposed to domination of the majority by a minority" (ibid., p. 63). Apart from the principle of majority, the interplay between the independent, self-regulated communities and the central administration (the role of the latter is to assist the communities) that Yannaras suggests, is not very far from the anarcho-federalist visions of people like Mikhail Bakunin or Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (see for instance a fine analysis in works such as Ward's, 2004, p. 85).

Hence, I believe that the best term to describe my own interpretation of Yannaras' political philosophy can be found in Daniel Payne's work. In his discussion of Yannaras' communitarianism, the author uses the term "ecclesial anarchism" (Payne, 2008, p. 446). If I understand this correctly, the main reason why Payne employs this word is because he wants to show that Yannaras' communitarianism involves a clear theological dimension. However, according to my understanding, this is not the only reason why this term is successful. More specifically, apart from the theological underpinnings of Yannaras' communitarianism, this term is able to capture other aspects of Yannaras' political thought too. In other words, I suggest that Yannaras' federalism, his criticism of the majority rule, as well as the Trinitarian foundation of his communitarianism, entail that Yannaras' communitarian politics must be categorised under the Christian anarchist umbrella: Yannaras is a Christian anarchist political thinker.

In one of the following sections, I will show that his conception of political freedom is another indication of Yannaras' Christian anarchist tendencies. For now, it suffices to point that the addition of the term "Christian" is particularly important, because anarchism has followed various directions in political philosophy. As scholars like Alexandre Christoyannopoulos remind us, Christian anarchism is different to other forms of anarchism, partly due to its theological dimension (2008, p. 5). This is undoubtedly a dimension that many secular anarchists would not be happy with, as one can infer from famous anarchist sayings, such as the "no Gods, no masters" one (see in Mark Van Steenwyk, 2012, p. 51; but also in Christoyannopoulos, 2008, p. 6). In other words, the Trinitarian foundation of Yannaras' political philosophy does not leave us many choices open. If he is an anarchist, as I claim here, then he must be a *Christian* one. To this, one may add that we should be very cautious when we look at Yannaras' political theory through the lens I propose here. More particularly, one of the difficulties that accompanies one's attempt to situate the work of this author in a Christian anarchist context is that his theory is quite unusual.

On the one hand, it is not very hard for someone to detect some common views that Yannaras shares with certain Christian anarchists. Take for instance the critical stance against some aspects of the Christian Church, present in the work of thinkers like Jacques Ellul. Ellul wrote against the medieval, Western Church institutions such as the Inquisition. For Ellul, the Inquisition was firstly founded in the 13th century in order "to fight against heresies" (Ellul, 1991, p. 31). Yet, it also served "a means of controlling opinion on the one hand and inducing collective fear on the other (because of the anonymity, the secrecy of the procedure, etc.)" (ibid., p. 31). According to Ellul, in some places (e.g. Portugal) not only did the Inquisition spread "fear" (ibid., p. 31), "it became an instrument of political power. Some kingdoms took it over in the 16th century, and

it became a terrible instrument in their hands" (ibid., p. 31). This means that it served as the tool through which those in power sentenced many humans "to death for politico-religious reasons" (ibid., p. 31).

In my view, it is more than evident that Yannaras would be in absolute agreement with Ellul's critical comments. However, throughout his work one will find an even broader claim than Ellul's. More particularly, apart from the "Inquisition," Yannaras writes against the "Index Librorum Prohibitorum" (i.e. the catalogue of prohibited books), the "Propaganda Fidei" [i.e., "μεθοδική πλύση εγκεφάλου των μαζών" [the systematic brainwash of the masses], and the "χρήση βασανιστηρίων ως ανακριτικής μεθόδου στις δίκες των αιρετικών" [use of torture as a method of interrogation in the trial of heretics] (Yannaras, 2015a, p. 145, see note 18).[29] Yannaras' position is that all these must be understood as being the historical predecessors of "ολοκληρωτισμού" [totalitarianism] in Western politics (Yannaras, 2015a, p. 145). One may assume that his claim is based on an Arendtian conception of totalitarianism, in the context of which things like "propaganda" play a crucial role. As Hannah Arendt puts it; "the masses have to be won by propaganda" (see Arendt, 1962, p. 341). Regardless of whether this particular connection between totalitarianism and Church practices is successful or not; one cannot deny that it serves as an indication of the fact that Yannaras would happily embrace Ellul's assertion "that anarchists are right to challenge this kind of Christianity, these practices of the Church, which constitute an intolerable form of power in the name of religion" (Ellul, 1991, p. 31).

[29] These references are found in Yannaras' book "Η Ευρώπη γεννήθηκε από το Σχίσμα" ("The Schism gave birth to Europe") which remains untranslated. The passages used from this work are translated by me.

However, although Ellul's critique certainly resonates with the Greek philosopher's, I argue that Yannaras' relation with Christian anarchism is a bit more complicated. The reason is that, despite the overlap, Yannaras would certainly keep a safe distance from certain other Christian anarchist positions. Tolstoy's pacifist criticism against laws is a very useful example for my analysis. According to Tolstoy, laws require "violence" (1900, p. 91);

> If there are laws, there must be the force that can compel people to obey them. And there is only one force that can compel people to obey rules (i.e. to obey the will of others) and that is violence; not the simple violence which people use to one another in moments of passion, but the organised violence used by people who have power, in order to compel others to obey the laws they (the powerful) have made in other words, to do their will. (ibid., p. 91)

Tolstoy believes that the citizens who desire to follow the rules are far less than the ones who comply because they worry about the consequences (ibid., p. 89); the state often imprisons ("deprivation of liberty"; ibid., p. 91) or even kills ("murder"; ibid., p. 91). Also, the author makes a claim that overlaps significantly with some other (secular) anarchist critiques of laws, such as Kropotkin's (1886, p. 10 and p. 12). He writes that "the laws are made not by the will of all, but by the will of those who have power, and therefore always and everywhere are such as are profitable to those who have power: be they many, or few, or only one man" (Tolstoy, 1900, p. 91).

In my view, Yannaras would probably be sympathetic towards some aspects of the Tolstoyan critique. For instance, as I will argue later, I think that his political philosophy rejects the image of a citizen who is subject to a law that they do not agree with. Yet, despite this similarity, one must note that Yannaras would not be comfortable with the

basic assumptions behind the Tolstoian position. As Iain Atack tells us, Tolstoy's "critique of the state as a form of institutionalized violence" must not be understood as distinct from his "pacifism," which stems from his own conception of the Christian teaching (Atack, 2019, p. 82). Thus, one may add that, being a pacifist, Tolstoy rejects violence altogether. Unlike Tolstoy and many other Christian anarchists, it would be a mistake to think that Yannaras' theology entails a *pacifist* political philosophy. For instance, the Greek philosopher seems to be happy with the idea of "επανάσταση [revolution]" (Yannaras,2006c, p. 287), understood as a step towards establishing politics of "μετοχή [participation]" (ibid., p. 288). If I get this right, Yannaras' only concern is that revolution must be a spontaneous event that does not follow any already-determined formula ("προκαθορισμένες μορφές εξέγερσης," ibid., p. 288). In other words, Yannaras' view leaves plenty of room for violent uprisings, whereas Tolstoy's pacifism entails that "we cannot improve the position of society either by continuing to support the Governmental violence that exists, or by introducing a fresh kind of revolutionary, or socialist violence" (Tolstoy, 1900, p. 126).

The discussion about the similarities between Yannaras' work and anarchism will continue in the next sections where I examine his political freedom. However, I believe that this particular section offers some new elements that help us understand Yannaras' notion of "citizen" even more thoroughly. Hence, apart from participating in a community that aims to imitate the Trinity, we must conclude that these citizens are going to be anarchist citizens, or, to slightly change the term that I borrowed from Payne a bit earlier – these citizens are going to follow an "ecclesial anarchist" way of life ("ecclesial anarchism", Payne, 2008, p. 446). In simpler terms, they will love others in the form of *agape,* they will value the gatherings of the Church, and also, they will

actively participate in the decision-making process of the community. Apart from these, however, these citizens are going to be politically free.

vii. The Politically Free Citizen in Yannaras' Work: Some Preliminary Remarks

The scholars who address Yannaras' idea of political freedom (e.g. Gligorić, 2021, p. 277; Cole, 2019, p. 302; Petrà, 2019, p. 62; Gounopoulos, 2018, p. 77) have mainly focused on what they call the "ἀποφατικοῦ ὁρισμοῦ (τρόπου κατανόησης) ἐλευθερίας" [apophatic definition (understanding) of freedom] (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 284). This type of freedom is found in books such as *Recta Ratio and Social Practice*. Even though this concept has been the object of scholarly attention before, one must note that it has not been explored thoroughly. In my own work, I will argue that this freedom must be explained in relation to both the *political* and the Trinitarian foundation of Yannaras' philosophy. In other words, unlike my previous attempt to briefly present this concept (Koronaios, 2018, pp. 172-174), here I will offer a *political* interpretation of this type of freedom; in simpler terms, I will show why this freedom must be conceived as a *political* kind of freedom. This means that I will connect it with some political conceptions of autonomy, but also I will situate it in the context of (what I describe as) Yannaras' Christian anarchist politics. Also, I will argue that, by virtue of being political, this kind of freedom must somehow be connected to Trinitarian freedom. However, before offering this new interpretation of the term I will provide a brief presentation of Yannaras' apophatic freedom.

The concept of "apophaticism" is often understood as a term that signifies negation. For instance, in traditional uses of the term such as the Aristotelean one (e.g. 1938, *On Interpretation,* VII, 17b, 20), ἀπόφασιν *(apophasis)* is translated as "negative" (the opposite of "affirmative"; ibid., p. 127). This interpretation of the term is implied in

some parts of Yannaras' work too. A fine, English translation of Yannaras' description of freedom comes from Norman Russell and is found in Basilio Petrà's introductory work (2019). According to this translation, in his *Recta Ratio and Social Practice* Yannaras writes that liberty '"negates" the alienation. It refers to the dynamic negation on the part of the subject of being something different from itself or, to put it in another way, freedom refers to the dynamic of the realisation of the identity of the individual.' (Yannaras, 1984 in Petrà, 2019, p. 62).

So far, the secondary literature that discusses Yannaras' politics has referred to this type of liberty (Gounopoulos, 2018, pp. 78-79; Petrà, 2019, p. 62; Gligorić, 2021, pp. 277-278). For instance, Gligorić mentions the term "otherness", noting that Yannaras' freedom refers to "the existential level of the acknowledgment of the identity of the subject." Thus, according to Gligorić's description, "the subject should be acknowledged in the society and within its dynamic and de-objectified relations as the being, which it really is i.e. in his otherness." (Gligorić, 2021, p. 277-278). In his discussion of freedom in Yannaras' *Recta Ratio and Social Practice*, Petrà brings forward the connection between "otherness" (uniqueness) and "relation" (Petrà, 2019, p. 62): "The individual otherness of the subject," writes Petrà, "must be thought of as unique but not in a monistic sense, but rather in a relational sense […]" (ibid., p. 62). Similarly, Gounopoulos explains Yannaras' perspective, by referring to "social and political relationships that promote the unique personality of every person." In his own words; "The social and political relationships that promote the unique personality of every person, by helping him to exceed the bonds of nature and social restrictions, need to grow and develop through a non-dogmatic and non-individualistic rationality" (Gounopoulos, 2018, pp. 78-79). One of the reasons why all these explanations of Yannaras' freedom are particularly relevant for my analysis here is that they refer to the

political. For instance, Gounopoulos is certainly right to refer to the aforementioned social and political relationships, because Yannaras himself emphasises the notion of "σχέσεις [relations]" (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 283; see also in Koronaios, 2018, p. 173). More specifically in the context of these relations, "humans" (ibid., p. 283)

> […] do not submit to and they do not conform to elements, rules or commands that assimilate subjective differences, they incorporate and classify the subject into generalised patterns of homogenisation of existence, ultimately neutralising the subjective otherness by subjugating it to the purposes of various necessities. (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 283-284)[30]

In my previous, non-political presentation (Koronaios, 2018, pp. 172-174) I explained that the individual enjoys this type of liberty when they are part of relationships that do not deter them from making their entirely unique "identity" (ibid., p. 173) real. Like Gligorić and Petrà I referred to notions such as "otherness" (ibid., p. 173) or "relation" (ibid., p. 173). My alternative, *political* interpretation is going to be analysed in the following sections of this chapter. However, it is important to note that, from now on, my analysis of Yannaras' political freedom will build on Gounopoulos' and Gligorić's descriptions. Also, Mitralexis' explanation of the term "activities" (2014, p. 104) will be useful for my interpretation. Departing from these views, I will argue that the best way

[30] I am very grateful to Maria Filippou for the translation of this particularly challenging passage: "...δεν υποτάσσεται και δεν συμμορφώνεται με στοιχεία, κανόνες ή προστάγματα που εξομοιώνουν τις υποκειμενικές διαφορές, εντάσσουν και κατατάσσουν το υποκείμενο σε γενικευμένα σχήματα ομοιομορφοποίησης του τρόπου της υπάρξεως, τελικά ουδετεροποιούν την υποκειμενική ετερότητα με το να την υποτάσσουν σε σκοπιμότητες ποικίλων αναγκαιοτήτων."

to conceive of Yannaras' "social and political relationships that promote the unique personality of every person" (Gounopoulos, 2018, pp. 78-79), is to think that, in his political community, no Person (citizen) should be compelled to do or to be something they do not want or freely accept to do or to be. Equally, in Yannaras' political community no Person (citizen) should be prevented from doing or being what they want or freely accept to do or to be.

In other words, this is a much more *precise* explanation of this type of freedom than the one I offered before, that aims at bringing three new features into play: the first is the political dimension, the second is the term "activities," and the third is the idea of "approving." I will show why this is this the best way to conceive of the Yannarian political liberty, and I will also offer my analysis of the political context in which this freedom must be categorised. In my view, these issues are essential but also challenging. One of the reasons for this is that they require an analysis of features that a superficial reading of Yannaras' work can very easily dismiss as secondary. In the next section I will clarifying the political nature of this freedom.

viii. Political Freedom in Yannaras' Work; Beginning With *Agape*

So far, I have showed that there are two distinct forms of freedom in Yannaras' work. The first is the political, which I will analyse in the following sections. The second is inner freedom. I argued that inner freedom is a process in which one tries to entrust one's life to God, but also a process in which one tries to discover and realise the will of God. I also pointed out that this relates to one of the things that God asked humans to do, which was to exercise *agape* (John 13:34). More specifically, I defended the view

that, since Yannaras' inner freedom is linked to one's struggling to realise the will of God, then to love others is to be free.

Throughout my political analysis, I argued that Yannaras is a Christian anarchist who opts for the creation of small, self-governed communities that aim to imitate the Trinity. This suggests that the members of these communities should try to co-exist in an *agapeic* mode of life. To be sure, as I pointed out, I am not the only one who thinks that Yannaras' politics are *agapeic* politics. For instance, Angelos Gounopoulos observes that "if 'freedom of relationship' refers to a life of trust in God and love for each other inside the polis, then this experience sums up the political theology of Christos Yannaras" (Gounopoulos, 2018, p. 79). Jonathan Cole makes a similar claim when he tells us that "'freedom' and 'love' are central concepts in Yannaras' theology and in his political theology" but also "integral elements in a functioning, authentic community modeled on the Trinity" (Cole, 2019, p. 302). Moreover, in his description of Yannaras' political philosophy, Slavov Atanas notes that "the true *polis* and politics […] need to be found on the 'power of love' and the communion of people" (Atanas, 2016, p. 135).

According to my reading, based on these features, one must reach a very specific conclusion about the notion of *agape* in the context of Yannaras' political philosophy. Therefore, I suggest that; since Yannaras' citizen should be an *agapeic* citizen, and since *agape* relates to inner freedom, then we must think that Yannaras envisions a type of citizen who is free in this inner sense. In other words, according to my view, the fact that *agape* is a virtue that the citizen must cultivate (in order to imitate the Persons of the Trinity) is only *one* reason why *agape* is a crucial concept in Yannaras' political philosophy. Apart from this, *agape* needs to be understood as one of the ways in which Yannaras' citizens can attain inner freedom. Although Gounopoulos does not follow the analysis I have offered in this thesis so far, perhaps he would agree with the view that I

defend here. He writes; “If ‘freedom of relationship’ refers to a life of trust in God and love for each other inside the polis, then this experience sums up the political theology of Christos Yannaras” (Gounopoulos, 2018, p. 79). This brief description seems to be very close to what I claim here, since it refers to the notion of “trust in God” but also the concept of “love for each other inside the polis” (ibid., p. 79).

To be sure, one must think that this type of *agapeic,* inner freedom does not presuppose an easy way of life. In my view, Yannaras sets high expectations for his citizens, inviting them to embrace a challenging mode of being. In his *Freedom of Morality* he asks: “What is perfect love?” Then he uses a quote that refers to how monk Agathon would reply to this question; “Agathon said, I want to find a leper and give him my own body and take his. That is perfect love” (Isaac of Syria n.d., in Spanos, ed. as cited in Yannaras, 1984, p. 269). If one applies this notion to Yannaras’ political philosophy, then one may think that Yannaras’ citizen has to work hard in order to attain inner freedom; the notion of *agape* invites us to assume that liberation can be a painful experience.

Apart from making this point, however, I wish to take a step further. More specifically, in my view, while the human version of *agape* helps us conceive of Yannaras’ inner freedom, the Trinitarian version of *agape* helps us conceive of Yannaras’ political freedom. In the preceding section, I made some preliminary remarks about Yannaras’ conception of political freedom. I referred to the description which is found in Yannaras’ works such as *Recta Ratio and Social Practice* and is emphasised by the secondary literature as well (Gligorić, 2021, p. 277-278; Petrà, 2019, p. 62; Gounopoulos, 2018, p. 77-79). Also, expanding on Gounopoulos’ position, I suggested a simpler version of Yannaras’ definition, according to which in Yannaras’ political community, no Person (citizen) should be compelled to do or to be something they do not want or freely accept

to do or to be. Equally, in the Yannarian political community no Person (citizen) should be prevented from doing or being what they want or freely accept to do or to be.

In my view, the best way for someone to conceive of this type of freedom, as well as the relation between this freedom and the political, is by considering the Trinitarian foundation of Yannaras' political community. As I argued, Yannaras' political community must aim at imitating the Trinity. Also, in section iii, I showed that Yannaras' conception of the Trinity comes with some specific theological assumptions. More particularly, I argued that in Yannaras' Trinitarian theology there are two ways in which the notion of *agape* is linked to freedom.

The first is the ontological way. As I showed in section i, Yannaras is among the theologians who interpret John's "God is love" in a literal way; "When Christian revelation declares that "God is love" (1 John 4:16) it is referring not to a particular property of God's "conduct" but to what God *is* as the fullness of triadic personal communion" (Yannaras, 2015b, p. 207). To be sure, as I noted, in my reading of Yannaras' work, humans can never fully understand the *perichoretic* relations of the Trinity. In other words, we do not really know much about Trinitarian *agape.* Yet, what Yannaras is sure about, is that the ontological version *agape* reflected in the Trinity is a sign of ontological liberty; God "[…] exists, since he loves and love is only an event of freedom" (1991, p. 35). In simpler terms, the fact that the three Persons of the Trinity exist as *agape* is an indication that they exist freely; no-one or no-thing ever forced them to exist. In my reading of Yannaras' position, this connection is justified on the grounds that no-one can be forced to love someone else.

The second way in which Trinitarian *agape* is linked to freedom relates to the mode in which Jesus existed after the Incarnation. As I argued, we can draw some conclusions about Trinitarian freedom from the very way in which Yannaras presents Jesus. One of

these conclusions is that the Father does not force the Son to do or to be what the Son does not want to do or to be. For instance, the Son freely accepts the Father's plan even at the cost of his own life. In my reading, Yannaras' *kenosis* (e.g. 2016, p. 40) provides us with an image of a Person acting out love toward another Person. It is not an image of a Person who is forced to do or be something they do not accept. This is precisely why the Son does not perform any "miracle," as Dostoevsky's novel tells us (2004, p. 256). Instead, he remains on the Cross until his life ends.

My interpretation of Yannaras' theological work suggests that the Trinitarian type of freedom is not irrelevant to Yannaras' political freedom. More particularly, I will argue that since Yannaras' political project is about a community that strives to imitate the Trinity, then the Trinitarian, *agapeic*, free mode of existence must be reflected in the very activity of the community.

To be sure, the link that I suggest between the freedom of each Person of the Trinity and freedom in the context of Yannaras' political community, requires further clarification. In my own work, I suggest that the Trinitarian foundation of Yannaras' politics leads to a very specific interpretation of political freedom. More particularly, I will argue that the Trinity is compatible with a political community, where each Person loves others, and where each Person is not constrained by any external interference (rule, law, other human) to which they do not consent. In other words, from my point of view, Yannaras' political freedom must be understood as being very close to some conceptions of autonomy and liberty.

ix. Political Freedom: My Interpretation

In my analysis so far, I tried to offer a more concise interpretation of Yannaras' political liberty, which reads as follows: in Yannaras' political community no Person (citizen) should be compelled to do or be what they do not want or freely accept to do or to be. Equally, in Yannaras' political community no Person (citizen) should be prevented from doing or being what they want or freely accept to do or be. Both in this section and in the following one, I will support this interpretation. More specifically, I will focus on what it means for a citizen to be part of "[…] social and political relationships that promote the unique personality of every person" Gounopoulos, 2018, pp. 78-79). Also, I will show why this specific conception of liberty is *political*. Finally, I will clarify the relationship between this type of liberty and Trinitarian freedom. I will now turn to address the first problem.

Gounopoulos' analysis resonates well with Gligorić's discussion of the Yannarian political theory, since, according to the second scholar, "the subject should be acknowledged in the society and within its dynamic and de-objectified relations as the being, which it really is i.e. in his otherness" (Gligorić, 2021, pp. 277-278). However, in my view, both descriptions of the Yannarian political liberty require a small addition. I believe that it is this addition that renders my own interpretation of the Yannarian political liberty essential. This addition has to do with the term "activities" that Mitralexis explains very well in one of his non-political analyses of the Yannarian philosophy (2014, p. 104). In other words, my suggestion that in Yannaras' political community no Person should be compelled to do or be what they do not want or freely accept to do or to be, relies a lot on my understanding of Mitralexis' description of Yannarian "activities" (Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 104). I claim that this notion is particularly

important for someone to conceive of Yannaras' political liberty. In my view, nothing or no-one should prevent the Person (citizen) to *act* as they wish in the political community. Based on this view, I will start building on Gounopoulos' description of Yannarian liberating politics as involving "[…] social and political relationships that promote the unique personality of every person" (2018, pp. 78-79).

The first point I wish to make is that the political view I defend here does not entail an "anything goes" type of liberty. As we have seen, according to my interpretation, Yannaras encourages his citizens to follow the will of God. This means that, in my view, Yannaras' political freedom is balanced by his inner freedom. From this point of view, one can do or become whatever they desire on the condition that this does not go against the will of God. For instance, any mode of action that is not compatible with principles such as *agape* does not seem to be compatible with this type of freedom either. Hence, as I will also explain in the next section, we should always keep in mind that Yannaras' "apophatic" (political) freedom belongs to a very specific context: the community that aims at imitating the Holy Trinity.

As I noted in section vii, Yannaras refers to an "ἀποφατικοῦ ὁρισμοῦ (τρόπου κατανόησης) ἐλευθερίας [apophatic definition (understanding) of freedom]", (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 284). I showed that one of the things that "apophaticism" signifies is "negation." Therefore, one may think that this negative definition brings Yannaras' position closer to "negative liberty" – a notion of a long past in political philosophy. Hobbes quite famously writes about the human "who in those things which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to do what he has a will to" (Hobbes, 2016, p. 118). Similarly, Isaiah Berlin – arguably one of the most influential, yet controversial freedom thinkers – applies negative freedom at the political level; "Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can act

unobstructed by others. If I am prevented by others from doing what I could otherwise do, I am to that degree unfree" (Berlin, 2002, p. 169). Berlin's negative freedom is often expressed by the term "non-interference": "The wider the area of non-interference the wider my freedom" (Berlin 2002, p. 170).

Personally, although I think that Yannaras' position certainly includes the idea that external "interference" can limit one's political liberty, the negative version of freedom seems to be a bit limited to fit Yannaras' conception. Judging from her own analysis of some aspects of Yannaras' freedom, I believe that Kristina Stoeckl would agree with my view, possibly adding that some classical accounts of "positive liberty" do not fit into the Yannarian context either (Stoeckl, 2007, p. 129). Yet, especially when it comes to Hobbes' negative version, I believe that Yannaras would raise various *political* objections. Charles Taylor argues that the "crude, original Hobbesian concept" (1985, p. 213) of liberty is, essentially, "an opportunity concept, where being free is a matter of what we can do, of what it is open to us to do, whether or not we do anything to exercise these options" (ibid., p. 213). More particularly, from this point of view, liberty "consists just in there being no obstacle. It is a sufficient condition of one's being free that nothing stand in the way" (ibid., p. 213). I believe that at least one of the reasons why Yannaras would reject the Hobbesian sense of liberty is because it leads to a very specific relationship between freedom and the law. Hobbes writes that;

> Fear and liberty are consistent. For example when a man throws his goods into the sea for fear the ship would sink, he does it nevertheless very willingly and may refuse to do it if he will […]. Generally all actions which men do in commonwealths, for fear of the law, or actions, which the doers had the liberty to omit, are free. (Hobbes, 2016, p. 118)

I think that Yannaras must be classified among the philosophers who do not wish to reject the idea that laws interfere with one's freedom (see for instance in Yannaras, 2021b, p. 11). Hence, I believe that he would find Hobbes' formulation quite problematic. One the other hand, in Berlin's text it is implied that Berlin would probably not agree with Hobbes when it comes to the idea of "law" either (see Berlin's reference to the "law," 2002, p. 169-170). In this sense, Berlin's own conception of "negative freedom" (ibid., p. 169) seems to be a bit closer to Yannaras' account. Yet, although I believe that there is some overlap between the two authors, I think that the best way to conceive of Yannaras' political freedom is by avoiding associating it with any purely negative or positive theory. A much more inclusive definition about freedom is more useful here – such as the one that we find in Gerald C. MacCallum's work. Quite famously MacCallum refers to a "triadic relation" (MacCallum, 1967, p. 314) that applies to all forms of liberty. Hence, "freedom" (ibid., p. 314), according to the author,

> […] is always freedom from some constraint or restriction on, interference with, or barrier to doing, not doing, becoming, or not becoming something. Such freedom is thus always of something (an agent or agents), *from* something, *to* do, not do, become, or not become something; it is a triadic relation. Taking the format "*x* is (is not) free from *y* to do (not do, become, not become) *z*," *x* ranges over agents, *y* ranges over such "preventing conditions" as constraints, restrictions, interferences, and barriers, and *z* ranges over actions or conditions of character or circumstance. (ibid., p. 314)

Apart from being much more inclusive than Berlin's or Hobbes', MacCallum's formulation refers to two elements that are particularly relevant for my analysis on Yannaras. The first is action ("*to* do"; ibid., p. 314), and the second is "becoming" (ibid., p. 314). Remember that, in order to offer my interpretation of Yannaras' political liberty, I want to build on the political analyses of scholars like Gounopoulos and Gligorić. Gounopoulos believes that the Yannarian political liberty requires "[…] social and political relationships that promote the unique personality of every person" (2018, pp. 78-79). According to my own interpretation of this type of political liberty, in Yannaras' community, no Person (citizen) should be compelled to do or be something they do not want to do or to be. Equally, in Yannaras' community no Person (citizen) should be prevented from doing or being what they want to do or to be. Why do I propose this specific interpretation? Why is the idea of action mentioned in MacCallum's approach relevant?

In Chapter 2, we saw that, according to Mitralexis' analysis of the Yannarian position, "activities" are the mode in which each Person realises their mode of existence "in a completely unique way" (Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 104):

> To mention an example, smiling, to smile, or laughing, to laugh, is an activity of the human substance and nature, it is to be found in every human being, in every particular manifestation of 'humanity'. But each human person manifests smiling or laughing, i.e. smiles and laughs, in a completely unique way, in a way that actualizes (not merely reveals, but actualizes) his substance as a hypostasis, in a way that actualizes complete otherness. The activities, being distinct from both the substance itself and

> the hypostasis itself, belong to the substance but actualize the hypostasis. (Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 104)

As I take it, this suggests that some features included in MacCallum's description of freedom – e.g., acting ("*to* do") (1967, p. 314)—are important for this context. More particularly, one must think that Gounopoulos' analysis of Yannaras' political liberty in terms of "[…] social and political relationships that promote the unique personality of every person" (2018, pp. 78-79) must be understood in a context where "activities" take place. Since the very Personhood itself unfolds through "activities", then each citizen must be conceived of as an individual who realises human essence "in a completely unique way" (Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 104) by acting. In other words, if Yannaras' political liberty presupposes "[…] social and political relationships that promote the unique personality of every person" (Gounopoulos, 2018, pp. 78-79), then we should think that Yannarian political liberty is certainly linked to the notion of "activities." This is where my own interpretation of Yannaras' political liberty fits.

As I noted, according to my approach, in the Yannarian political community, no Person (citizen) should be compelled to *do* or *be* what they do not want to *do* or *be*. Equally, in Yannaras' community no Person (citizen) should be prevented from doing or being what they want to do or be. Hence, by this specific definition I suggest a possible interpretation of what counts as "[…] social and political relationships that promote the unique personality of every person" (Gounopoulos, 2018, pp. 78-79). According to this interpretation, a political system that allows these kinds of relationships to flourish is a political system that does not deter citizens from realising their "unique personality" (Gounopoulos, 2018, pp. 78-79) in a way that they *approve* of; that is, through (what Mitralexis describes as) "activities" (2014b, p. 104) they wish

to do. If I understand her point correctly, it seems to me that Stoeckl would agree with at least part of my analysis of Yannaras' challenging notion: "The freedom of the person," writes Stoeckl, "lies not in the realization of some essence, but in the free choice whether to desire a 'positive' self-realization or not. This is the freedom of the human being to accept the idea of being created in the image of God or to reject it" (2007, p. 129). In my view, Stoeckl's references to the idea of "free choice" and the notion of "realization" could be linked to what Mitralexis calls "activities" (2014, p. 104). From this point of view, one could argue that "the Person" (Stoeckl, 2007, p. 129) has a "free choice" (ibid., p. 129) to pursue certain "activities" (Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 104), through which the Person's "self-realization" (Stoeckl, 2007, p. 129) unfolds.

To be sure, without this "free choice" (ibid., p. 104), citizens will always remain unique – even in the case where a particular political system prevents them from acting as they wish. According to my suggestion. however, in such a scenario they will not pursue the "activities" (Mitralexis, 2014, p. 104) that they wish, and in this sense, they would not approve of the very *way* in which their "unique personality" (Gounopoulos, 2018, pp. 78-79) is realised. An example could help here: if someone is thrown into prison (say for their political beliefs), they do not *stop* realising what Gligorić calls "otherness" (Gligorić, 2021, p. 278) through what Mitralexis calls "activities" (2014b, p. 104). For instance, they still eat, sleep or walk "in a completely unique way" (Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 104). The realisation of human essence goes on. Yet, they are prevented from engaging in certain "activities" (Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 104) that they would otherwise pursue. In other words, they are compelled to realise human essence in a mode that they do *not* approve of. They are still "unique" (Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 104) but not in the way that they have *approved*. According to my interpretation, political liberty is at stake here. This is one of the reasons why I believe that my

reformulation of Yannaras' freedom is essential for this context. In other words, it is true that Yannaras' liberty is about "otherness" (Koronaios, 2018, p. 174; Gligorić, 2021, p. 278) or about individuals who are capable of "being themselves" (Koronaios, 2018, p. 174)—as I argued before. However, this explanation is not enough. If the Yannarian liberty simply amounts to "[…] being fully itself" (Yannaras in Petrà, p. 62) then one could argue that all individuals enjoy this type of liberty all the time because they never really stop engaging with certain "activities" (Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 104) through which they realise their entirely "unique personality" (Gounopoulos, 2018, pp. 78-79). However, I suggest that this is not true. In my view, the very nature of "activities" (Mitralexis, 2014b, p. 104) matters in this context, because these "activities" must be accepted or approved by the agent. It is in this sense that, in the Yannarian political community, no Person (citizen) should be compelled to do or to be something they do not want to do or to be. Equally, in the Yannarian community, no Person (citizen) should be prevented from doing or being what they want to do or to be. Yet, where is the political?

As I noted previously, I would hesitate to classify Yannaras' freedom among purely negative liberty theories. Yet, I believe that at least some discussions of negative freedom are relevant for my analysis of Yannaras' position. For instance, previously I referred to Berlin's conception of "political liberty," according to which "Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can act unobstructed by others. If I am prevented by others from doing what I could otherwise do, I am to that degree unfree" (Berlin, 2002, p. 169). Although Yannaras' political freedom is different from Berlin's negative liberty, it seems plausible to think that Yannaras' political freedom presupposes Berlin's view that other humans *can* restrict our liberty. I believe that this restriction is something that Yannaras' position tries to avoid too.

Also, in his critical discussion of libertarianism, Shelly Kagan tells us that "what we are after is the most extensive system of liberties with the same liberties being granted to *everyone*. It is *this* criterion which the libertarian claims to meet" (1994, p. 20). This is what Kagan calls as "the equality constraint" (ibid., p. 20). To be sure, further versions of this equality requirement are found in anarchism, that is, the type of libertarianism that I linked with Yannaras' work in section vi. For instance, it is implied in Malatesta's demand for "equal freedom for all and the right, therefore, to resist every violation of freedom" (2015, p. 43). Also, in my view, in some anarchist contexts equality entails certain rights and duties. More particularly, I believe that this is finely captured by Proudhon's phrase: "We need to live our lives according to the dictates of our reason. It is our right to maintain our freedom. It is our duty to respect that of others" (Proudhon, 1983/1876, p. 69).

Although Yannaras would certainly have a problem with the notion of "rights" (see for more in the Inhumanity of the Right, 2021b, p. xi), I believe that his freedom needs to be understood as an equal type of freedom. More specifically, in the context of his *agapeic* community, one may think that each Person respects the freedom of others and enjoys equal freedom to do or to be what they wish to do or to be. To be sure, we must keep in mind that my reading of Yannaras suggests an *agapeic* form of libertarianism and thus, it is significantly different to the one that secular anarchists refer to. Hence, we should always remember that the type of freedom I discuss here is accompanied by the inner, *kenotic* freedom I mentioned before. Equal freedom co-exists with *agape* in this specific context.

Also, we should keep in mind that when I write about equal, political freedom in Yannaras' case, I do not suggest that any form of interference with one's freedom should be ruled out. For instance, when I write that in the context of Yannaras' community,

no-one and no-thing compels a Person to be or to do what they do not desire, which does not necessarily entail a political community of Persons lacking any rules. In order to conceive of this properly, one should go back to Berlin's conception of freedom. More particularly, one should think that apart from the negative freedom, Berlin's influential *Two Concepts of Liberty* (2002), includes a positive "sense" of "liberty" too (ibid., p. 178). Here, I do not wish to refer to Berlin's criticism against this type of freedom, nor to address every aspect of this freedom thoroughly. What is interesting for my analysis is that, according to Berlin, this type of freedom "derives from the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master. I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind" (Berlin 2002, p. 178). Berlin's individual aspires "to be a subject, not an object" (ibid., p. 178). What seems to keep the two separated, is that the former is driven by "reasons, by conscious purposes, which are my own, not causes which affect me, as it were, from outside" (ibid., p. 178). To be sure, such a formulation is reminiscent of what some political and/or moral philosophers would normally recognise as autonomy. This term is also described as "self-governing" or, according to Rousseau's classical formulation (used also by Berlin in a slightly different context, 2002, p. 183), as "obedience to the law that one has prescribed for oneself" (Rousseau 1997, as cited in Simpson, 2006, p. 92).

More particularly, Berlin's phrase about "reasons […] [are] conscious purposes, which are my own, not causes which affect me, as it were, from outside" (2002, p. 178), seems to imply that positive freedom is related to what some people would call "authenticity." John Christman argues that "authenticity conditions often include the capacity to reflect upon and endorse (or identify with) one's desires, values, and so on. The most influential models of authenticity in this vein claim that autonomy requires second-order identification with first order desires" (Christman, 2020, n.p.). Then, he uses

Harry Frankfurt's discussion (1987) adding that: "For Frankfurt, for instance, such second-order desires must actually have the structure of a volition: wanting that the first order desires issue in action, that they comprise one's will. Moreover, such identification, on his view, must be 'wholehearted' for the resulting action to count as free (autonomous)" (Frankfurt, 1987, as cited in Christman, n.p.). If I understand it correctly, this position suggests that autonomy involves critical reflection: one focuses on something they desire, then they ask themselves *why* they want it, eventually reaching a stage where they want to want what they want.

The reason why I believe that this discussion is important is because it can be applied to the notion of "rule" or even to the notion of "law." Remember, that according to my interpretation of Yannaras' position, political freedom does not necessarily entail the rejection of any restrictions on freedom. In other words, the fact that no Person should be compelled to do or be something they do not desire does not necessarily mean that no Person must ever encounter any external restrictions whatsoever. In my interpretation, what matters is the restriction to which the Person does not *consent*. This is the point in which the notion of "law" becomes part of the equation.

Interestingly, in his criticism against Hobbes' notion of freedom, Taylor thinks that "second-order" and "first-order desires" help us "rank freedoms in importance" (Taylor, 1985, p. 220). Throughout his paper, he uses an example of a driving law; "Thus we could say that my freedom is restricted if the local authority puts up a new traffic light at an intersection close to my home; so that where previously I could cross as I liked, consistently with avoiding collision with other cars, now I have to wait until the light is green" (ibid., p. 218). According to Taylor, this example shows that, although someone could claim that the driver's liberty is interfered with, "the activity and purposes inhibited here are not really significant" (ibid., p. 218). Taylor continues by

noting that people would normally hesitate to label this example as a case where one's freedom is at stake. Instead, the author invites us to think that "what we feel we are trading off is convenience against safety" (ibid., p. 218).

In my view, if someone reflects on Taylor's driving example based on the distinction between "first-order" and "second-order desires" (ibid., p. 220), then one could create a slightly different example: Jack values "safety" (ibid., p. 218) on the roads. Also, Jack believes that driving without any interference whatsoever undermines "safety." However, at a certain point, Jack admits to his friend that he wishes he could drive without any interference whatsoever. Thus, he expresses a "first-order desire." Yet, after putting this specific wish into words, Jack comes back to the real world. He starts reflecting on his "first-order desire" (ibid., p. 220). Once he realises that "safety" (ibid., p. 218) is more valuable to him, he disapproves of his "first-order desire." In other words, he does not *want* to want to drive without any interference. Instead, he *wants* to want to drive in a way that maximises "safety" (ibid., p. 218).

My interpretation of Yannaras' position on freedom is close to this view since, as I noted, it does not seek to rule out any type of interference whatsoever. More particularly, I think that Yannaras' citizen does not remain free at all costs; instead, the Person possesses this very specific sense of autonomy, in the context of which they can approve, and therefore allow for, some restrictions to apply. In my view, the first-order and second-order rationale can be a good way to imagine how a Person may treat the laws that restrict their liberties. Yet, this is not the end of the story.

According to my understanding of Yannaras' political philosophy, not only must we think that there is some room for the Person to embrace some legal restrictions; my reading of his political philosophy as a theory of *agapeic* unanimity (section vi), entails that there must be a common agreement among the members of the community about

the laws of the community. In his *The Inhumanity of the Right* Yannaras argues that "the Law" should promote "the otherness or freedom of every human subject" (2021b, p. 11). More particularly, according to Yannaras, "the Law" (ibid., p. 11) should not "define and judge actions" (ibid., p. 11), but their "social functionality" (ibid., p. 11). It should aim at promoting "relations" (ibid., p. 11) and, more importantly: "The Law defines and distinguishes relation from non-relation, that is, from its alteration to an event of the dependence, submission and control of one or more subjects by other subjects" (ibid., p. 11). In this sense, the Law should protect and promote "the reciprocity of the communion of persons free from necessities, the priority of the sharing of life as the freedom of making choices, the freedom to prioritise life's needs" (ibid., p. 12). If I get this right, according to Yannaras, the laws that protect our relations from becoming relations of "submission" promote and support our "freedom" (ibid., p. 11). One may think that these laws must be conceived as the means through which the Persons lose some of their liberties so they may attain inter-personal "freedom," (ibid., p.11). As I put it, before, they are *autonomous* Persons. And they are autonomous because they are in absolute control of their own liberty.

The relationship between autonomy and law has been also discussed by people who have written on anarchist politics (to which I have largely associated Yannaras' work). Quite famously, Robert Paul Wolff advocated a type of "unanimous direct democracy" in the context of which "every member of the society wills freely every law which is actually passed. Hence, he is only confronted as a citizen with laws to which he has consented" (Wolff, 1998, p. 23). It would not be an exaggeration to think that Wolff's idea is reminiscent of Tolstoy's anarchist critique to which I referred in section vi. Tolstoy thought that "the laws are made not by the will of all, but by the will of those who have power, and therefore always and everywhere are such as are profitable to

those who have power: be they many, or few, or only one man" (1900/2007, p. 91). Other anarchists, like Kropotkin would certainly agree with this critique of law (Kropotkin, 1886, p. 10 and p. 12). Yet, it is evident that when it comes to Wolff's case specifically, the aim of the approval requirement ("consented" Wolff, 1998, p. 23) is to serve "the duty of autonomy" (ibid. p. 23). Thus, from Wolff's perspective the "autonomous" person "[...] is constrained only by the dictates of his own will […]" (ibid., p. 23), which is basically why the green light is required in the case of laws that regulate one's behaviour and action. In her explanation of Wolff's work, apart from "will," Suissa adds "reason" as well, writing that this conceptualisation of autonomy exists in "both the liberal and the anarchist account" (Suissa, 2006, p. 52). To be sure, one must agree with Suissa in dismissing Wolff's commitment to autonomy as a "duty" for being too "Kantian" to successfully portray "the anarchist view, according to which autonomy is less a 'duty' than a quality of life to be created, aspired to and dynamically forged in a social context along with other social values" (ibid., p. 52). Yet, if someone leaves this "duty" element outside for a while, one may think that Wolff remains a good example for my point here. In other words, what I understand from Wolff's anarchism is that laws limit our freedom, and thus if we do not choose them freely, we are not autonomous. If this reading is correct, then one may think that Yannaras' "ecclesial anarchism" (Payne, 2008, p. 446) is quite close to this type of anarchism by virtue of valuing this type of autonomy: from this perspective freedom can be restricted only when autonomy remains intact. In my reading, Yannaras' citizen is a mature Person who loves others and engages in the challenging, collective process of choosing which liberties they are going to sacrifice freely so they may facilitate their *agapeic* co-existence.

According to more classical accounts of anarchism, it seems that autonomy must be respected even in cases when someone is "condemned by the laws of any society, commune, province or nation" (Bakunin, 1973, p. 69). From Bakunin's perspective, for instance, even when convicted, one must "retain the right not to submit to the sentence imposed on him, by declaring that he no longer wishes to be part of that society. But in such a case the society in question shall have the concomitant right to expel him from its midst and to declare him outside its warrant and protection" (ibid., p. 69). Bakunin does not refer to autonomy in this specific context. Yet, in my reading, the proponents of the type of autonomy that I discuss here must find his view particularly attractive.

Let's use an example to show how this Bakuninian element affects autonomy in a community where unanimity is required for laws: A citizen agreed that a certain law 'X' should restrict their liberty. By accepting this law 'X', they also consented to the punishment prescribed by the law. However, in my reading, Bakunin's rule allows them to change their mind: They can disagree with the prescribed punishment, even when they are about to face it. To be sure, some may (quite plausibly) question the moral status of such a disagreement. Yet, what one cannot avoid noticing is that the community values and respects individual autonomy even in these extreme cases. To be sure, this theory does not overlook the potential dangers. Indeed, allowing people to avoid punishment is not a practice that protects individuals from anti-social behaviour. Therefore, this type of freedom is not granted unconditionally in the Bakuninian political context: as we have seen, the community can always get rid of the individual if they do not serve their sentence.

In my view, it is very tempting to associate Yannaras' Christian anarchism with these ideas. The reason is that these notions refer to political conditions under which the "otherness" of each human Person is largely appreciated. Yet, I believe that, in

Yannaras' case, things are a bit more complicated, because, as I argued, Yannaras' community is an *agapeic* community. *Agape*, in my view, is something unpredictable. Hence, we cannot say much about the way in which the community would react in cases where the law is broken. This reading appears to be quite compatible with Yannaras' description of the "relation" (Yannaras, 2021b, p. 13) between a "judge who administers the law" (ibid., p. 14) and "the judged" (ibid., p. 13) in his *The Inhumanity of Right*. Specifically, the author tells us that it must be conceived as "a unique and dissimilar unrepeatable relation" (ibid., p. 13). One may think that even when a case is assessed legally, Yannaras invites us to think about Persons – unique humans – the behaviour of which we cannot really predict. If one imagines that these Persons love each other then I believe that it is difficult to think about the outcome: Should they forgive each other? Should they impose a type of punishment that will not contradict *agape* towards "the judged" (ibid., p. 13)? Should they choose to deliver justice out of a concern for the rest of the community?

Finally, in some variants of anarchism one reads about another type of freedom which appears to be compatible with the notion of autonomy that I discuss here. Moreover, I believe that this type of freedom is particularly relevant for Yannaras' political community. This freedom refers to the formation of the political community itself. Kropotkin vividly addresses this freedom when he writes about "human beings who will combine freely […]. This is the tendency of the nineteenth century and we follow it; we only ask to develop it freely, without governmental interference. Individual liberty!" (Kropotkin 2019, Part 2). He goes on to say, " 'Take pebbles,' said Fourrier, 'put them into a box and shake them, and they will arrange themselves in a mosaic that you could never get by entrusting to any one the work of arranging them harmoniously.'" (ibid., Part 2). From Kropotkin's perspective, human co-existence will

advance “from the simple to the complex according to mutual needs and tendencies” (ibid., Part 3). This suggests that the formation of the political community itself will be the result of the free action of autonomous individuals. These individuals will not be forced to create or join such communities. What I think Kropotkin implies by referring to “mutual needs and tendencies” (ibid., p. 61) is that prior to the formation of these communities there is room for individuals to reflect on their “needs” and determine the mode in which the community will be governed based on this reflection. In this case, I believe that autonomy remains a possibility since, ideally, the governing principles of the community will be the result of a free choice.

When it comes to Yannaras’ case, I believe that things are quite clear. More particularly, I think that it is difficult to imagine how his community is going to be consistent with the principles I have described so far, without the type of freedom suggested by Kropotkin. In fact, it is impossible. Part of the reason why this is the case is because, in my interpretation, the participants of this community try to attain inner freedom. One of the concepts that I have associated with inner freedom is, of course, *agape.* In Chapter 2 we have seen that Yannaras understands *agape* as an entirely “free” action, “[…] the realization of life as communion and relationship is nevertheless a fruit of freedom - there is no necessary or compulsory communion or relationship of love” (1991, p. 77). In my view, Yannaras’ political community itself must be conceived of as “a fruit of freedom” (1991, p. 77). Forming, participating, or leaving a community which is founded upon the principle of *agape* cannot be conceived outside this context of liberty. In other words, the very fact that no-one can be forced to exercise *agape* is one of the features that brings (what I describe as) Yannaras’ Christian anarchism even closer to secular anarchist variants such as Kropotkin’s. In the next section, I will clarify

the connection between the type of freedom I described here with the idea of Trinitarian freedom.

x. Trinity: The Conceptual Basis

So far, I have offered my own interpretation of Yannaras' political freedom. More particularly, I have attempted to explain this notion in much simpler terms than Yannaras. Also, I have provided my suggestion on how this freedom is linked to politics. In this section, I wish to take a step further. I will argue that the reason why this interpretation of freedom is valuable, is because it invites us to detect a link between political freedom and Divine freedom. But why is this important?

As I have argued, a good way to understand Yannaras' political philosophy is to think that the political community that he has in mind must aim at imitating the life of the Holy Trinity. There are various ways for someone to conceive of this imitation. For instance, I have already referred to the relevance of the notion of *agape*—the virtue that Yannaras' citizens are called to exercise. Yet, one may quite plausibly assume that this imitation must not leave the idea of freedom unaffected. More particularly, in my view, one must think that if the aim of human politics is to imitate the life of the Holy Trinity, then Trinitarian freedom must somehow be reflected in the political freedom that the citizens of the community enjoy. To be sure, this is quite challenging, as it requires us to find plausible ways in which Trinitarian freedom can be adjusted to fit a human political community. We must not forget that the gap between the two realities is huge. For instance, according to Yannaras' Trinitarian theology, the freedom of the Persons of the Holy Trinity is an absolute, metaphysical freedom, and we know for a fact that

humans do not possess such a freedom. However, this is where my interpretation of Yannaras' political freedom comes into the game. I argue that this interpretation leaves room for Yannaras' political freedom to be conceived of as an adjustment – the adjustment of Trinitarian freedom to fit a political community. Hence, we have one more reason to think that this interpretation is consistent with Yannaras' philosophical and theological thought. And the reason for this is because it brings Yannaras' political freedom closer to what I think of as the claims of his political Trinitarianism. In other words, according to my reading, a properly Yannarian type of political freedom is one that can meet the "imitation of the Trinity" requirement [31]. I will now turn to show why I think that my interpretation does this job well, offering Yannarian readers an additional reason to embrace this interpretation.

As I pointed out, according to my reading of Yannaras' theology, Trinitarian freedom is linked to *agape,* that is, the Trinitarian mode of existence. His literal interpretation

[31] The idea of imitation that I bring forward may cause a reaction from some readers of Yannaras' political trinitarianism. For instance, Cole writes that "the idea here is one of human participation in, rather than imitation of, a divine prototype or archetype of existence, with the linguistic and conceptual implication being that the human political experience reflects, perhaps even resembles, but certainly does not replicate, the original" (Cole, 2021, p. 7). Although I think that Cole's reading has its merits, in my view, notions such as Volf's idea of "copying God" (Volf, 1998, p. 405) serve as a good way to conceive of concepts such as '"prototype" or "archetype"' that Cole uses to describe Yannaras' viewpoint: "This Trinitarian mode of existence forms a "prototype" or "archetype" of human political association" (Cole, 2021, p. 7).

of John's "God is love" (1 John 4:16, as cited in Yannaras, 2015b, p. 207) refers to ontological liberty; God "[…] exists, since he loves and love is only an event of freedom" (1991, p. 35). From this perspective, to exist as *agape* presupposes the very freedom to exist in the first place: because *agape* is a free choice, it cannot be enforced. Also, in my interpretation of Yannaras' Trinitarian freedom, the Trinitarian mode of *agape* entails another type of freedom: no Person compels or forces another Person to be what they do not freely choose. I suggested that this freedom is evident in some examples that Yannaras brings when he refers to Jesus, that is, the second Person of the Trinity who is both human and God at the same time, after the Incarnation. From these examples, I noted that one should conclude that the relation between the Father and the Son is a relation in which no-one compels the other to do or to be something that they do not freely accept. For example, as I pointed out, according to my reading of Yannaras, the Son embraces the plan of the Father freely and out of love, performing *kenosis* (e.g. Yannaras, 2016, p. 40) and dying a cruel death.

My interpretation of Yannaras' political freedom suggests that no human Person should be compelled to do or to be what they do not desire, and equally, that no Person should be prevented from doing or being what they want. When it comes to politics, I associated this type of freedom with the notion of autonomy. Hence, I argued that, in the context of Yannaras' Christian anarchism, all citizens discuss and decide what types of restrictions they are going to set on their own liberty, in order to co-exist in harmony and *agape.* Thus, since common agreement is required (according to my suggestion), these citizens restrict their liberty through laws that they desire or freely accept. In this section, I wish to point out that one of the reasons why this is a good interpretation of Yannaras' political freedom is because it can be understood as the result of an adjustment – the adjustment of Trinitarian freedom to fit a political community: that is,

a community that consists of *humans*, namely, beings that do not share the same characteristics with the Divine Persons. I will now turn to discuss these ideas more thoroughly.

First, one must note that the idea that the Trinity can (or must) be associated with human freedom is not a new one. For instance, Daniel L. Migliore writes that the idea "that God is a trinity of love means that concern for new community in which there is a just sharing of the resources of the earth and in which relationships of domination are replaced by relationships of honor and respect among equals has a basis in the divine way of life" (Migliore, 2014, p. 82). It seems that Johannes P. Deetlefs would agree with Migliore's point, since he argues that "the fact that human beings are created in the image of the triune, God rules out the mastering of certain individuals or groups over others" (Deetlefs, 2019, p. 6). To be sure, prior to making such a statement, Migliore admitted that "we cannot fully understand or adequately describe the triune life in its richness and self-differentiation [...]" (2014, p. 81), and therefore that many Trinitarian scholars have only drawn "analogies" (ibid., p. 81) between the divine and human reality. Migliore's point seems to sit very well with Yannaras who characterises God's way of being as "fundamentally inaccessible" (Yannaras, 2007b, p. 253), but also with the view of Miroslav Volf, another influential political theologian who refers to the idea of "analogy" (he uses the term: "analogous", Volf, 1998, p. 405). More particularly, Volf tells us about the "two basic limits" (ibid., p. 405) that we encounter when "human community" is suggested to be "modeled on the Trinity" (ibid., p. 405). The first of them is that "[...] since ontically human beings are manifestly not divine and since noetically human notions of the Triune God do not correspond exactly to who the Triune God is, Trinitarian concepts such as "person", "relation", or "perichoresis"

can be applied to human community only in an analogous rather than a univocal sense" (Volf, 1998, p. 405).

Apart from these views, progressive political theology has described the Trinity as a source of inspiration for social and political emancipation. Thus, referring to those, "men and women, who remain oppressed and permanently marginalised" (Boff, 1988, p. 306), Leonardo Boff argues that "those who believe find an incomparable inspiration for the liberation struggle in the God of their faith. This liberation aims to bring about participation and communion, the realities that most closely mirror the very mystery of trinitarian communion in human history" (ibid., p. 307).

Quite famously, Jürgen Moltmann went several steps further than other political theologians arguing that "religiously motivated political monotheism has always been used in order to legitimate domination, from the emperor cults of the ancient world, Byzantium and the absolute ideologies of the seventeenth century, down to the dictatorships of the twentieth" (Moltmann, 1993, p. 192). Elsewhere, he offers the example of Genghis Khan, who said "to some Franciscan monks who tried to convert him" in 1254, that "in heaven there is no other than the one, eternal God, on earth there is no other than the single lord Genghis Khan, the Son of God. This is the word being said to you" (Michael de Ferdinandy, 1958, as cited in Moltmann, 2015, p. 5). This type of "political monotheism" needs, for Moltmann, to be distinguished from the Trinitarian approach of God since, as he contends, "the doctrine of the Trinity which, on the contrary, is developed as a theological doctrine of freedom must for its part point towards a community of men and women without supremacy and without subjection" (1993, p. 192).

To be sure, this way of thinking about the Trinity has not escaped criticism in political theology. For instance, Kathryn Tanner argues that "monotheism can also suggest

(particularly when understood to deny that divinity is a general category) that no one shares in divinity and therefore that no one can stand in as God's representative: no lord but God" (2010, p. 208-209). Also, Tanner clearly wants to avoid a "sharp distinction between monotheism and Christian trinitarianism. Trinitarianism is after all a form of monotheism, as Christians maintain" (2010, p. 217).

Interestingly, some of these critical reflections need to be viewed in the context of a wider discussion that seeks to determine the relation between the Trinity and politics. Yannaras' own political trinitarianism has been examined in similar contexts, having been compared with the work of some aforementioned thinkers, such as Volf or Tanner (see Cole, 2019). One may even note that my interpretation of Yannaras' political freedom is quite close to some of these views on the Trinity. For instance, it certainly agrees with the idea that the model of the Trinity is not compatible with "the mastering of certain individuals or groups over others" (Deetlefs, 2019, p. 6), and with political practices of "supremacy and subjection" (Moltmann, 2015, p. 192). Also, it presupposes notions such as "participation and communion" (Boff, 1988, p. 307). To be sure, this observation must be accompanied by the acknowledgement that Yannaras' work is also very different to the work of most of these people (especially Moltmann or Boff).

More importantly, however, my interpretation of Yannaras' political freedom presupposes the notion of "analogy" mentioned by people like Migliore (2014, p. 81) and Volf (1998, p. 405). This suggests that I do *not* seek to identify Yannaras' political freedom with the ontological freedom that the Persons of the Trinity enjoy. In other words, I am not interested in challenging the idea that these two freedoms are distinct freedoms. Instead, the reason why I believe that my interpretation of Yannaras' political freedom is successful is that it allows us to draw an analogy between them. More particularly, one may think that just as the Persons of the Trinity do not compel one

another to do or to be what they do not desire or freely accept, so must the citizens of the human, political community. To be sure, this does not suggest that these citizens enjoy the metaphysical freedom of the Trinity; they only strive to apply it analogically to their communities.

I believe that Volf's formulations help us conceive of this idea a bit better. Volf writes that "between 'copying God in all respects' (so seemingly Fedorov) and "not copying God at all" (so seemingly Peters) lies the widely open space of human responsibility which consists in "copying God in some respects" (Volf, 1998, p. 405). Apart from this, he tells us that "human beings can correspond to the Triune God only in historically appropriate ways" (Volf, 1998, p. 405). Now, let's turn to examine how Volf's formulation can be applied to my interpretation of Yannaras' conception of freedom. When it comes to the Incarnation Yannaras writes that, "God is then existentially free from every necessity of mode of existence and can therefore also exist by the mode of human essence or nature (as a perfect human being) without ceasing to be God" (Yannaras, 2011b, p. 51). Apart from this, as I noted, Yannaras refers to the Trinitarian *agape*, describing it as an indication of the fact that no-thing or no-one forced God to exist (e.g. 1991, p. 35). In my view, the application of Volf's position about "copying God in some respects" (Volf, 1998, p. 405) can lead to the following view about freedom: Unlike God, humans did not have the freedom to choose whether they wanted to start existing. Also, unlike God, humans are not free to become entirely different beings (by receiving a different essence). Yet, they can still imitate some *aspects* of the Divine freedom, "in historically appropriate ways" (to use Volf's phrase again; 1998, p. 405). Specifically, they can imitate the relation between the Father and the Son, trying not to force or compel others to do or to be what they do not want to do or to be. For instance, working towards this aim, they can govern themselves by rules and laws that

are freely accepted by every citizen. In other words, they can all agree in liberty restrictions that respect the very autonomy of each Person. In this context, no citizen will be forced to accept any restriction that regulates their behaviour in ways they do not freely accept. From my point of view, the idea of rules or laws serves as a very good political analogy that shows how the Trinitarian notion of *agapeic* freedom can be adjusted to fit the political community.

Hence, I believe that these discussions show that my interpretation of Yannaras' political freedom *can* be seen as an adjustment of Trinitarian freedom to fit a political community. This is precisely why I suggest that this interpretation is valuable for Yannaras' work. More particularly, I think that it offers Yannaras a way to understand his own freedom that agrees with what I take to be his broader political and theological commitments. The reason for this is because this kind of freedom can be understood as an imitation of Trinitarian metaphysical freedom. According to the view that I defend here, the citizens who create institutions, rules or laws that do not compel others to do or to be what they do not desire or freely accept, are human Persons who have come up with ways to imitate the free relation among the Persons of the Trinity.

CHAPTER 4: THE THEORY AND AN ADDITIONAL AIM

Introduction

In this chapter I will do two things. First, I will gather the theoretical elements I have analysed so far. My basic aim is to show why I believe that these elements constitute what I label as Yannaras' philosophy of education. For instance, one of the things that I am going to demonstrate is why I believe that my analysis and interpretation of Yannaras' philosophical and theological work are connected to his criticism against the Greek education of the 1980's. The second goal of this chapter is to analyse an additional educational aim that I believe that can be drawn from Yannaras' work. After this presentation, I will be able to proceed with my critical evaluation of Yannaras' philosophy of education.

i. Christos Yannaras' Philosophy of Education: From the Greek 1980's to the Theory

In this section, I am going to claim that the theoretical elements presented in my thesis help us construct what I take to be Yannaras' philosophy of education. Hence, according to my understanding, this section achieves the first aim of this thesis. This aim was to argue that from Yannaras' work, one can draw out a certain philosophy of education. Thus, having analysed the various elements that I believe constitute this philosophy of education, I will now show how the different aspects that I have discussed so far are connected to each other, helping us reach the big picture.

In Chapter 1 I discussed the concept of "noema [aim]" (2000, p. 23) but also the term "orama [vision]" (2000, p. 20). As I pointed out, Yannaras needs to be understood as being suspicious towards the term *orama* (2000, p. 20), for various historical reasons. For example, in my interpretation, I linked *orama* [vision) to an oversimplified version of Christianity, imagined by the leaders of the 1967-1974 dictatorship in Greece. This oversimplification helped the Dictators adjust Christian theology to fit their authoritarian politics. To be sure, as I described, Yannaras was not happy with the way the Dictators treated education. The author was not satisfied with education in Greece during the democratic, *metapolitefsi* period either. According to my interpretation of the Yannarian term "shadowing," the Greeks thought that the basic aim of education was to prepare students to succeed in their exams.

Importantly, I explained that Yannaras' criticism included two basic elements that allow us to reach some conclusions about his own alternatives for education. The first relates to his worry that the Greek Education of the 1980's did not prepare humans to become "citizens" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24). The second problem was that, according to his view, the Greek education of the 1980's did not actively seek to avoid humans becoming what he called "egocentric beings" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24). What Yannaras found problematic was that in some school textbooks there was not a single reference to concepts such as "κοινωνική φιλαλληλία [benefaction, altruism]" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24) or the idea of "humans helping each other" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24). In my view, the notion of "egocentrism" and the idea of "citizens" are crucial for a proper conception of what I take to be Yannaras' philosophy of education. I will now turn to show why.

I suggest that in order for someone to conceive of Yannaras' philosophical reflection on education properly, one must attempt to understand what Yannaras means when he

uses the term “egocentric beings” (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24) in his *Paideia* text that I discussed in the first chapter. According to my reading, Yannaras’ “egocentrism” is incompatible with notions such as “humans helping each other” (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24) or “κοινωνική φιλαλληλία [altruism]” (ibid., p. 24). This suggests that one way to interpret the term “egocentric beings” in *Paideia* is by using one of the two conceptions of “egoism”” (2019, p. 2) offered by Maurer. According to the author, this notion is also “used in proximity to ‘selfishness’ to blame someone for having acted for her own benefit only, possibly to the detriment of others” (ibid., p. 2). In other words, I believe that Yannaras invites Greeks to think that one of the aims of education should be to create citizens that do not only care for themselves, and their own interests or needs. They should be humans who care about the well-being of other people and try to do the best to help them.

This specific conception of “egocentrism” which is closer to what Maurer calls “selfishness” (2019, p. 2) is certainly compatible with the other version of “egocentrism” that, according to my interpretation, one shall find throughout Yannaras’ work. In my view, which I defended in Chapter 2, one is “egocentric” in the Yannarian sense when they refuse to entrust their life to God and pursue God’s will. In my view, the connection between the two notions becomes apparent if one thinks about the notion of *agape.* From the Christian point of view, God asked humans to exercise *agape* (John 13:34). Now, *agape* cannot and must not be understood as a process where someone ignores others, being exclusively focused on their own interests, their own needs or well-being. The *agapist* is often understood as someone who leads a self-sacrificial life that intends to serve the beloved. In this sense, one may think that the type of “egocentrism” to which Yannaras refers in his *Paideia and Language* text is a small part of his wider theory of “egocentrism” that I discussed in Chapter 2. In simpler terms,

one way in which someone pursues the will of God is by exercising *agape*, and by loving properly, one is not selfish. A crucial question for my analysis is the following one; Why did Yannaras choose to refer to this narrower sense of "egocentrism" in his *Paideia* text?

I think that the best way to reply to this question is to think again about Yannaras' readers. Specifically, one should keep in mind that the philosopher writes for his compatriots who live during the 1980's. This suggests that his audience is diverse. The people who care about Christian theology or who are interested in leading a Christian way of life are merely one fraction of his audience. Yet, in my view, Yannaras' reference to this specific aspect of "egocentrism" suggests that the author assumes that one does not have to be Christian (or religious) to consider selfishness problematic. Indeed, Yannaras does not seem to feel the need to delve into the ills of selfishness in his *Paideia* text. He takes for granted that a good part of his readers would agree that selfishness is wrong. Hence, in my view, while throughout Yannaras' systematic works "egocentrism" appears as a significantly wider notion, in this specific text, the author refers exclusively to "selfishness." In my view, the reason is because selfishness is an aspect of "egocentrism" to which many of his compatriots can relate, regardless of their metaphysical convictions.

Nevertheless, this is not the whole story. According to my interpretation, Yannaras' rejection of "selfishness" does not entail that the author abandons his broader conception of "egocentrism." In other words, I believe that although the author refers to this limited version of "egocentrism," the ideal scenario for him would be that the Greeks should avoid this broader type of "egocentrism." In other words, the ideal scenario would be for the Greeks to live a life of trust and love towards God and other people. In my view, this suggests that behind Yannaras' criticism lies an ideal which is

not expressed. In Yannaras' perspective, this would be for Greece to be governed by the communitarian, Christian anarchist model that I described in Chapter 3. In other words, we must not think that we are dealing with two entirely different "authors." In my interpretation, the desired citizen would not be the citizen who simply tries to avoid selfishness but the Person who trusts God and lives according to the Divine will.

To be sure, this interpretation presupposes that Yannaras did not expect Greece to start a revolution during the 1980's. I believe that the author was aware that the country was very unlikely to embrace the Christian communitarian model that I draw from his philosophical and political treatises. Thus, one may think that Yannaras knows that any suggestion of this sort would seem too far-fetched for many Greek readers during the 1980's. In his *Recta Ratio and Social Practice,* the author himself admits that the "άμεσης δημοκρατίας [direct democracy]" (2006c p. 286) that he suggests "θα παραμείνει ουτοπική [is going to remain utopian]" (2006c, p. 287), until humans realise that it is absolutely necessary. I do not think that Yannaras believed that, in this historical phase, Greeks thought it was necessary to start a revolution. In my view, he is aware that the new democratic version of the Greek state was very well received by many citizens who had suffered the ills of the Dictatorship. Thus, I believe that Yannaras' references found in his *Paideia* text can be understood as a compromise. What I suggest that Yannaras does, is that he calls his compatriots only to take *some* steps towards his own *orama* [vision] for politics and education. This is precisely why he implies that education has a role to play in creating unselfish citizens. These citizens may not avoid "egocentrism" in its wider sense. In other words, they may not become members of small, self-governed communities that aim at imitating the life of the Holy Trinity by entrusting their lives to God or pursuing God's will. However, at least, they

could be citizens of a democratic state who avoid selfishness, which is a small part of "egocentrism."

I believe that something similar could be said about the notion of "κοινωνική φιλαλληλία [altruism]" (Yannaras, 2000, p. 24) to which Yannaras refers. As I pointed out, "altruism" is among the concepts that are missing from the textbooks the author criticises. The absence of any reference to this notion, according to the philosopher, indicates that 1980's Greek education did not pay sufficient attention to the problem of selfishness. To cut a long story short, I think that the message that Yannaras wants to convey to his compatriots is that, first, education should find ways to teach students ways to not be selfish. Second, education should create citizens who embrace "altruism." Yet, if one goes back to my interpretation of Yannaras' political philosophy, one must think that the ideal is slightly different: in my view, the author calls his citizens to be *agapists*, not "altruists." Someone may quite plausibly argue that the two notions are not entirely different. An *agapist* can certainly act in an "altruistic" way. For instance, by virtue of being an *agapist* one can sacrifice their own comfort to serve the needs of another person. Yet, in my view, if a scholar known for his commitment to Orthodox theology wanted to refer to *agape* in one of his public articles, he would not avoid using this specific, theological term ("αγάπη"). Although Yannaras does not define "altruism" in his text, one must think that it is a far less theological notion than *agape*, in the sense that it can be easily used in entirely secular contexts. Hence, if this reading is correct, one may think that from Yannaras' point of view, it would be too far-fetched to suggest that the Greek education of the 1980's must create the *agapists* he envisions; namely, the citizens that imitate the life of the Trinity by loving one another. Yet, this liberal type of education could, at least, create citizens who exercise "altruism" and try to avoid selfishness.

However, my work seeks to address Yannaras' own philosophy on education. Hence, what interests me is to uncover what I believe that Yannaras *really* asks for from education, even without openly expressing his views. This is the point where I think that one should make a transition from Yannaras' criticism of education in Greece during the 1980's to what I consider to be Yannaras' own *orama* (vision) for education. To be sure, his criticism of education in Greece during the 1980's is still of much use since it provides us with some notions that we should not ignore; for instance, in my view, Yannaras' own philosophy of education would still require education to create "citizens." Yet, these citizens would be non-egocentric Persons (in the wide sense of the term) and not merely people who avoid selfishness. They would also be Persons who live in small, self-governed communities that strive to imitate the life of the Holy Trinity. These Persons would be politically free and autonomous, engaging in what Gounopoulos describes as "social and political relationships that promote the unique personality of every person" (2018, pp. 78-79). Moreover, "altruism" would not be the best term to describe the virtue that these citizens would strive for. Instead, these citizens would love one another exercising *agape,* in a similar way in which the Persons of the Trinity treat one another. In this sense, I believe that Yannaras' education should create *agapists.*

Perhaps the best way to conceptualise this type of education is to think that it functions within the communities that Yannaras envisions: it is not a type of education that exists in a liberal democratic state. Also, it is evident that throughout his *Paideia* text, Yannaras frequently emphasises the idea that education must have specific goals (e.g. I have already discussed the term "aim", 2000, p. 21). In my view this suggests that a type of education that is consistent with Yannaras' philosophy should be understood as an education that has some clear aims. Specifically, it seems to me that

this type of education should teach students how to become citizens who are *agapists.* This suggests that in the context of this type of education, the avoidance of "egocentrism" plays a cardinal role. In other words, the future citizen of which education aims to create, should attain inner freedom, in the sense that they should try to entrust their lives to God and act in accordance with the will of God. This presupposes that one cannot conceive of the political implications of this type of education without considering Yannaras' Trinitarian theology. The Person who is educated to become a citizen is a Person who is educated to find ways to imitate the Trinitarian mode of life. Loving others is not the only way for this Person to do so. Another possible way derives from the Trinitarian version of *agape,* which, according to Yannaras, signifies freedom—a type of freedom that Persons can apply to their political life in an analogical way, as I argued in Chapter 3. This entails that in this type of education, the Persons are not only prepared to become free in the inner sense of the term (for instance, they do not only learn how to exercise *agape*). They also learn to avoid compelling others to do or be what they do not desire or accept. In other words, this type of education should teach students to be autonomous Persons, who respect the freedom of others, as I have described in Chapter 3. Hence, in my view, we must think that by creating such citizens, Yannaras' education should aim at reproducing the communitarian, political model in the context of which it operates.

Apart from these aims, there is another aim that I believe that Yannaras would probably add here. In Chapter 1, I briefly referred to a response that the philosopher gave in an interview in the Ἀντιφωνητὴς [Antifonitis] newspaper. As I pointed out, the author tells us that one of the things that the contemporary Greek school must do is to cultivate "κριτική σκέψη [critical thought]" (Yannaras, 2006a, p. 7). The reason why this skill is needed is because, in contemporary world, one has access to a huge amount

of "πληροφορία" [information] online. Hence, from Yannaras' perspective, one must have the skills to "θὰ κρίνει τὴν πληροφορία [assess the piece of information]" but also to "ἀξιοποιήσει [make good use of]" it (ibid., p. 7). In my view, we should think of this as an aim that Yannaras would happily keep in what I describe as his philosophy of education. In simpler terms, Yannaras' citizen is not merely an *agapist*, an autonomous Person who values freedom and who realises their essence relationally; they should also possess skills that would help them adjust to the demands of the modern world. As I take it, education has a crucial role to play here. In the next section, I will discuss the final aim that I believe that Yannaras' philosophy of education would embrace. After this section, I will turn to the Second part of my thesis, where I critically reflect on what I suggest to be Yannaras' views on education.

ii. Captivating Courses as an Educational Aim: Yannaras' Non-Metaphysical Platonism

The last aim that I think Yannaras would include in his philosophy of education relates to what I label as "captivating courses." I believe that this aim derives again from Yannaras' discussion about schools in Greece. In one of his articles in *Kathimerini* the author argues that in the Greek schools "[…) η μάθηση χαρά και η συνύπαρξη γιορτή, η γλώσσα έρωτας […]" [learning should be joy, co-existence should be a festival, language should be eros] (2018b, n.p.).[32] When he mentions "language" in this specific context, Yannaras refers to the Greek language. The author adores Greek. For instance, he is well known in Greece for defending the view that Modern Greek schools should teach Ancient Greek, which he considers important for

[32] My translation from Greek.

various reasons (see for instance, Yannaras, 2023, n.p.). Also, in a previous analysis, I argued that Yannaras prefers a "relational approach" to "language-teaching" that is linked to the notion of "joy" (Koronaios, 2018, p. 170). However, what is interesting for my discussion here is that when the author raises this issue in another context (interview), he emphasises the availability of contemporary "παιδαγωγικές μέθοδοι [pedagogical methods]" (Yannaras, 2016a, n.p.)[33] which he calls "συναρπαστικές [fascinating]" (ibid., n.p.). In his own words, these techniques "μπορούν να κάνουν την εκμάθηση της γλώσσας παιχνίδι" [can turn language learning into a game] (ibid., n.p.). In my view, we must not read his references to "language" as distinct from his general commitment to the broader idea that "η μάθηση χαρά… [learning should be joy]" (2018b, n.p.). Also, in my view, Yannaras' reference to these engaging techniques must be combined with some of Yannaras' concerns. For instance, in another article in *Kathimerini*, the author complains that his compatriots do not understand schools as places where the students should go in order "να γοητεύονται από το καινούργιο, να ψάχνουν το άγνωστο, να ανακαλύπτουν το μοναδικό" [to be charmed by the new, to investigate the unknown, to discover the unique] (2018a, n.p.).[34] According to my interpretation, these public articles show that, for Yannaras, part of what education must do is to aim for what I would describe as "captivating courses." I therefore suggest that Yannaras highly values the ideal of an enchanted student, that is a student who likes what they learn.

In my view, a good way to conceive of these references is by thinking that they belong to what one could call the "Platonic view" on education. Quite famously, throughout Plato's *Symposium*, one reads about a type of attraction between a student and a certain

[33] My translation from Greek.
[34] My translation from Greek.

object of knowledge. The student is attracted by the object, and thus they want to acquire some knowledge about it. More particularly, Plato portrays Socrates as a figure who says to his fellow symposiasts that, once, he met Diotima, a wise woman "who taught me the whole subject of love" (Plato, 2008, p. 37; 201d). "Love" in this context is the English term for the Ancient Greek "ἔρως" (eros). Hence, we read about the "mystery of love" (ibid., p. 48, 209e), which refers to a process of "initiation" (ibid., p. 48, 210a). This mystical educational experience involves a "guide" who helps someone appreciate the "beauty" that exists in various aspects of reality, such as human "bodies," human "souls" (ibid., p. 48; 210b), "human practices and laws" (ibid., p. 48; 210c). This route is described as a process in which someone is directed to move from appreciating the "beauty" of the less important things (e.g. for Plato these would be the "bodies") to admiring the beauty of the more important ones (e.g. "branches of knowledge" etc.). Hence, throughout *Symposium* one finds this archetypical image of a student who is attracted by a certain object of knowledge, through the help of a teacher. This archetypical image I call "the Platonic view." Of course, attraction is not the only pedagogical dimension found in this context. For instance, Chien-Ya Sun argues that "the role of the teacher is therefore crucial, in enabling students to see what is of true value in life, but was not recognised before" (2019, p. 496). However, the "attraction" dimension is much more crucial for my analysis here.

In this sense, one could argue that Yannaras can be conceived as another philosopher of education who could be labeled a "Platonist." His emphasis on the idea that students should be "charmed" or even his references on "eros" in an educational context align with the archetypical descriptions of Plato. To be sure, Yannaras is an *eros*-thinker himself, as one can conclude from other works, and his account of "eros" does not stem from Plato's work. Instead, it is the early Christian theology that must be identified as

the main source from which Yannaras draws in order to construct his own conception of "eros" (e.g. 2005, p. 100-101). Yet, part of what I think renders Yannaras a Platonist is that he associates this term with education. Moreover, one should add that Plato's references come with a certain metaphysical conception of e*ros* which I am sure Yannaras would reject. This is not a trivial comment since Yannaras is not merely an author who writes about education, but a philosopher who has his own metaphysics of love. Plato's metaphysics of love in the *Symposium*, portray Eros ("Love", 202d, 2008, p. 38) as a "great spirit" (202e, ibid., p. 39). This means that Eros is a spiritual entity which is neither "mortal" nor divine (202e, ibid., p. 39), but "something in between mortal and immortal" (202d, ibid., p. 38). Given that, for Plato, "deity and humanity are completely separate" (203a, ibid., p. 39), Eros operates as an "intermediary" (202e, ibid., p. 39), effectively "interpreting and conveying all that passes between gods and humans: from humans, petitions and sacrificial offerings, and from gods, instructions and the favours they return" (202e, ibid., p. 39).

As I noted in Chapter 3, Yannaras has his own metaphysics of *agape*, founded upon a literal interpretation of John's "God is love" (1 John: 4:16). One may also think that Yannaras' commitment to the doctrine of Incarnation would probably bring him closer to some theorists who compared the "mediators" of each tradition. As Leo Strauss puts it in his commentary borrowing Gerhard Krüger's view (2001, p. 191); "And Kruger, to whose book I have previously referred, makes the remark that this is really the difference between Christianity and Plato; the mediator is not Christ, it is Eros." Quite similarly, for Irwin Singer, the figure of Eros and that of Jesus are presented to us as "mediators" and "messengers" (Singer, 1984, p. 300). Theorists like George Van Kooten (2018) focus even more on the *Symposium's* 203a, to which I referred earlier, where we read that "deity and humanity are completely separate" (203a, 2008, p. 39).

Interestingly, van Kooten reads this phrase as a direct contrast to the Christian idea of the "incarnation" of Christ; "contrary to the statement of Plato's Symposium that "God with man does not mingle" (Symp. 203a), Jesus is the incarnated Logos." (2018, p. 140).

In my view, therefore, Yannaras can be understood as a selective Platonist who aligns with van Kooten's comment, embracing the following views: On the one hand the metaphysics of *Eros* must be rejected. Unlike Plato's *Eros*, who is neither human nor divine, the Christian mediator (Jesus) is *both* human and Divine at the same time: "God is then existentially free from every necessity of mode of existence and can therefore also exist by the mode of human essence or nature (as a perfect human being) without ceasing to be God" (Yannaras, 2011b, p. 51). Yet, despite this difference, what must be kept from Plato's *Symposium* is an entirely non-metaphysical account of *eros*. This involves the image of a certain student who is attracted by certain subjects and objects. Guided by their teacher, this student wishes to gain knowledge about these subjects and objects. In other words, I suggest that Yannaras' educational theory would keep the "ερωτική σχέση [erotic relationship]" (2006c, p. 200)—a term that Yannaras himself use in one of his (non-educational) discussions of this particular segment of the *Symposium*.

This entails that Yannaras' non-metaphysical Platonism resembles the type of Platonism that, in my view, is to be found in other educational thinkers, whose work helps us to understand Yannaras' position better. John Amos Comenius, a Christian pedagogue (17th century) is certainly a very good example. To be sure, like Plato, Comenius writes in an entirely different historical period than Yannaras, which influences the way in which he describes education. For instance, one must keep in mind that, during Comenius' era, physical violence was still permissible as a form of

punishment. Yet, I suggest that despite the historical differences, Comenius' version of what I call the "Platonic view" is valuable for my analysis of Yannaras' ideas.

Comenius appears sympathetic towards Isidor's view, according to which ancient philosophy is deprived of "the wisdom" found in the Scriptures (e.g. Isidor, n.d. as cited in Comenius 1907, p. 239). However, as one can infer from his *Great Didactic*, Comenius appears surprisingly sympathetic towards Plato's work. More particularly, Plato was certainly among the philosophers whose work Comenius thought should be allowed in the type of education he was advocating for, because in such writings "comparatively little error and superstition are to be found" (Comenius, 1907, p. 245). This approach cannot be understood properly without reference to the fact that Comenius was a committed Christian who thought that "if we wish our schools to be truly Christian schools, the crowd of Pagan writers must be removed from them" (ibid., p. 231). However, despite this explicit rejection, Comenius' theory leaves some space for a selective integration of these works in the type of education he envisioned, "so that, in spite of our caution, their beautiful thoughts, sayings, and deeds may not be lost to us" (ibid., p. 231). However, although the Christian pedagogue admitted that he had a "zeal in this matter" (ibid., p. 231), one cannot deny that some references found in this book indicate that even Comenius' own educational thought had been influenced by Plato's insights (see for instance his quotes on Plato, ibid. p. 55).

Therefore, it must not surprise us that Comenius delves into a topic that, according to my interpretation, echoes the relation between the student and the objects of knowledge found in Plato's *Symposium*. More importantly, I think that Comenius' approach provides a good framework for someone to conceive of Yannaras' ideas too—even though Yannaras would certainly keep a safe distance from other views, such as Comenius' "zeal" against ancient philosophy. The first reason why I believe that

Comenius' work is relevant is that, unlike Plato's "mystery of love" (2008, p. 48, 209e), the Christian pedagogue refers to young students in schools. Also, what I describe as Comenius' "Platonism" must be conceived of as a theoretical position emphasising the importance of the teacher's role -- a role that, in my interpretation, Yannaras considers to be significant too. More specifically, Comenius argued that it is certainly the teacher who is responsible for structuring the courses in a way in which their "inherent pleasantness" will "entice" students (ibid., p. 250). However,

> If this be not the case, the fault lies, not with the pupil, but with the master, and, if our skill is unable to make an impression on the understanding, our blows will have no effect. Indeed, by any application of force we are far more likely to produce a distaste for letters than a love for them. (ibid., p. 250)

In other words, Comenius' teaching prioritises the captivating aspects of each course. As I take it, the pedagogue implies that this "attraction" matters, should a teacher aim at leading students to "love" what they learn (ibid., p. 250). In simpler terms, like Plato's, Comenius' teacher can be understood as someone who helps their student appreciate the beauty of a given object. I suggest that the best way for someone to conceive of Yannaras' references to features such as "παιδαγωγικές μέθοδοι [pedagogical methods]" (Yannaras, 2016, n.p.) that are "συναρπαστικές [fascinating]" (ibid., n.p.), is to think that Yannaras implies a similar view towards the teacher. According to my interpretation, like Comenius', Yannaras' teacher seems to be responsible for fulfilling a specific aim, which is for their students to find their courses captivating. Also, although it could be argued that this is implied for Comenius too, it

seems that Yannaras' Platonism calls teachers to teach in a pleasant way: this is why Yannaras refers to techniques that "μπορούν να κάνουν την εκμάθηση της γλώσσας παιχνίδι" [turn language learning into a game] (ibid., n.p.). I suggest that Comenius' position can be useful for Yannaras' teacher with respect to this dimension. A teacher who aims at teaching in a pleasant way, could be also conceived of as someone who tries to identify the aspects of the course that their students will find captivating, and highlight them extensively when they present the subject.

Finally, there is another dimension that I consider important. By using the term "captivating courses," I do not wish to portray Yannaras as someone who thinks that learning is necessarily easy. The reason why I believe that this is true is because Yannaras is happy to use the term "eros" both when he describes interpersonal relationships but also when he refers to relationships between students and courses of study (as I pointed out). Yet, one must not overlook the fact that, according to the Greek philosopher, proper *erotic* relation is challenging. In his *Variations on the Song of Songs*, a book that includes a rather poetic approach to *eros,* Yannaras writes that "there is no love which does not pass through phases of sacrificial self-denial and total self-offering" (2005a, p. 14). A bit later in the text he goes on to ask: "is it humanly possible for the wonder of erotic surprise to persist within a daily exercise of self-denial and self-offering?" (ibid., p. 17). According to my interpretation, Yannaras implies that *erotic* relations require us to work hard both to keep our relationship with the beloved alive but also to cultivate it.

In my view, this suggests that what counts as "captivating" in this context involves many levels of "attraction" (to use Comenius' term, 1907, p. 250) within school. Specifically, some students may be attracted to what teachers teach and simply enjoy their time in school. Yet, this type of attraction may cause others to develop a properly

erotic stance towards what they learn. Hence, Yannaras' Platonism involves a type of challenging *eros* which I think could be portrayed through an example offered by R.K. Elliot, another philosopher of education. In my view, this example shows that Elliot is far more Platonic than authors like Comenius, but also that his Platonism serves us well in clarifying Yannaras' assumptions. Elliot's "student" (Elliot, 1974, p. 36) finds himself in a hard situation, since he discovers that "his enthusiastic interest" is not sufficient for him (ibid., p. 136). Specifically, this student wants to deepen his knowledge about his "discipline" (ibid., p. 136) more and more. However,

> there are standards which have to be met, and to meet them he has to develop skills and abilities which he did not originally associate with his subject. He also has to do a good deal of work which seems uncommonly like drudgery […] His relationship to his subject now bears an analogy to courtly love […], a love which makes extreme, even cruel, demands and offers no guarantee of pleasure. (ibid. p. 136)

Elliot's student eventually embraces the challenge, fights for his subject, "and performs the drudgery with a good heart, without resentment" (ibid., p. 136). In my view, like Elliot, Yannaras would not hesitate to label this stance "erotic,' which is precisely why I suggest that what I call "captivating courses" is a rather broad category. It refers both to how teachers teach their courses but also to the type of love that students develop towards what they are being taught. This love can range from a mere attraction to a challenging version of *eros* that calls the lover to abandon their comfort zone and respond. Having therefore clarified Yannaras' non-metaphysical Platonism, I will now

turn to the second part of my thesis, where I offer my critical evaluation of what I describe as Yannaras' philosophy of education.

SECOND PART

INTRODUCTION

In this part of my thesis, I will critically reflect on what I describe as Yannaras' philosophy of education. Given that, as I argued, Yannaras' philosophy of education consists of various political, philosophical, and theological claims, I will only focus on some aspects of it. More particularly, in Chapter 5, I will evaluate Yannaras' conception of *agape* by testing whether it is precise and thorough. The reason why I believe that this is a significant step to take is that, according to my interpretation, Yannaras' philosophy of education aims at the creation of an *agapist,* namely, a citizen who loves.

In Chapter 6, I will evaluate what I think Yannaras' link between *agape* and critical thought is. In this context, the *agapist* is often required to reflect critically on their motivations in order to test whether they are egocentric or not. Hence, I will firstly assess this link by pointing that it does not tell the whole story about the relationship between the *agape* and critical thought. In simpler terms, I will identify some further connections between *agape* and critical thought, which I think are useful for the Yannarian position that I have proposed in the first part. More particularly, they are

valuable because they provide Yannaras with further reasons why critical thought can be a handy tool for the *agapist.* Then, I will discuss the work of Martha Nussbaum. According to my reading, Nussbaum writes about citizens that are required to love in critical ways. It is important to add that, as I will show, the views of Nussbaum are slightly different to Yannaras', in the sense that her concept of love refers to an object (love of one's country). In other words, it is not an inter-personal type of love. The reason why I will focus on this particular discussion of Nussbaum is because it includes an interesting way to look at the relationship between love and critical thought in an educational context. More particularly, I will show why Nussbaum's educational theory can improve what I suggest to be Yannaras' theory, by offering a valuable link between love and critical thought.

In Chapter 7, I will turn to discuss Hannah Arendt, using her work as a methodological tool for my critical analysis. More particularly, in my view, Arendt offers us some insights that can improve what I think to be Yannaras' approach. Specifically, the philosopher can assist us in re-considering the role that the teacher should play in the type of education that I have described in the previous part of my thesis. Finally, in Chapter 8, I will assess Yannaras' conception of the Trinitarian basis of *agape* by showing what it contributes to some contemporary philosophical discussions on education. I will delve into critical pedagogy, that is, a body of educational literature that associates love with politics very often.

CHAPTER 5: THE *AGAPEIC* CITIZEN

i. The Importance of Precision and Thoroughness

> Thus, the Fascist loves in actual fact his neighbor, but this "neighbor" is not merely a vague and undefined concept, this love for one's neighbor puts no obstacle in the way of necessary educational severity, and still less to differentiation of status and to physical distance (Mussolini, 2005/1933 p. 345)

This is what we read in *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism*, a text written by Benito Mussolini, Italy's Fascist prime minister (1922-1943) and dictator. This passage is a very good example of how poorly defined concepts can leave us particularly perplexed. Mussolini suggests that love is compatible with what he calls "necessary educational severity." Yet, what does "necessary educational severity" mean? Some may think that a possible way to reply to this question requires us to delve into Italy's political history, focusing on the years where Mussolini was in power. For instance, we know that during the late 1920s, many of Mussolini's political opponents were thrown into prison, and the same applies to intellectuals who objected to fascism. The reason is finely summarized by Michael R. Ebner, who notes that: 'the Fascist totalitarian utopia aspired to create a society without political opposition, dissent, or even a public memory of socialism, pacifism, and other forms of left-wing "subversion"' (Ebner, 2011, p. 73). Yet, even if Mussolini's "educational severity" includes things such as persecution due to the "wrong" political ideas, which conception of love can be thought to be compatible with such practices? What kind of "love for

one's neighbor" (Mussolini, 2005/1933, p. 345) is this? If love "puts no obstacle in the way of necessary educational severity" (ibid., p. 345), then, what about Mussolini himself? Should we understand his behaviour as the embodiment of the ideal that he describes? More particularly, is the Fascist who throws his opponents into prison a loving Fascist? Or should we assume that "educational severity" refers to much milder practices, and thus, by enforcing this persecution policy, Mussolini fails to embody the ideal of the loving Fascist? After all, many political ideologues are known for having failed to actualise what they stood for, and it seems that, according to some people, this is unavoidable. For instance, in 20th century Marxism, one can find voices such as Nicos Poulantzas', who writes about the "[…] bricklayers who set to work on the distance between theory and practice – those people skilled in application of texts and reduction of the real who can always lay claim to the theory in all its purity [...]" (Poulantzas, 2014, p. 22-23). Poulantzas thinks that the "the distance between theory and the real always persists despite the effort to fill it" (ibid., p. 23). Should we assume that Mussolini is simply another "victim" of this "distance?" (ibid., p. 23).

The truth is that we cannot be sure about what the right answer to these questions is. Importantly, one of the main reasons for this is that, to the best of my knowledge, Mussolini does not give us any description of what he means when he refers to "love for one's neighbor" (Mussolini, 2005/1933 p. 345). In fact, he does not even bother to refer to at least some features of this type of love. In simpler terms, Mussolini is a very good example of someone who associates love with politics, using the notion of "love" in "vague" (ibid., p. 345) ways. Moreover, in my view, the example of the Italian politician shows that part of the reason why it is necessary to be precise and thorough when we associate love with politics, is not simply because this help us understand each other. More importantly, precision and thoroughness allow us to characterise certain

political practices as loving or non-loving. In other words, regardless of what Mussolini believes about the love of his Fascist, the assessment of Mussolini's own persecution practices requires at least some description of love. The decision about whether his political actions are loving or non-loving cannot be made without any further clarification of the notion.

To be sure, some may object to this that, in this particular case, mere intuition suffices. Specifically, from this point of view, one does not really need to start counting the features of love in order to think that the act of throwing someone to jail because they have different political convictions cannot be called an act of love. Hence, precision and thoroughness are not always that significant. As I take it, this opinion has its merits. Yet, when it comes to politics, things can become more complicated than they are in Mussolini's persecution policy, which is when the importance of precision and thoroughness becomes apparent. I will now offer an example that illustrates this.

Let's imagine one of these dictators that contemporary political philosophy usually calls "benevolent" (e.g. Williamson, 2018, p. 112). This dictator worries a lot about his citizens, and he (they are usually a "he") wants to act for their own good. Thus, he decides to enforce a law which he thinks is great because it will meet an important need that his people have. Let's imagine for the sake of the discussion that this law bans some sports like boxing. The dictator thinks that these sports are very dangerous for human health. Moreover, he cares for his fellow citizen's health to such an extent that he acts out of surprising self-sacrifice. This means that although the vast majority of the citizens disagree with this law, the benevolent master does not care about the fact that his popularity levels are plummeting. He enforces the law because serving his fellow citizens' health is a top priority. Service and self-sacrifice: the benevolent dictator wants to do good for his fellow citizens. He definitely *cares*.

It would be helpful to classify the dictator's law among what contemporary political philosophy would describe as "paternalist" interventions. Gerald Dworkin describes "paternalism" as "the interference with a person's liberty of action justified by reasons referring exclusively to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests or values of the person being coerced" (Dworkin, 1972, p. 65). Some may rush to claim that our dictator's conception of what is "good" (ibid., p. 65) for his citizens is too limited. For instance, based on an observation found in Michael N. Goldman and Alan H. Goldman's study, one can very plausibly think that such rules could have a negative effect on some of those whom they are trying to serve. More particularly, this can be inferred by the authors' claim that legal restrictions could deny some people a profitable profession (Goldman and Goldman, 1990, p. 73). Thus, from this perspective, by focusing exclusively on serving public health, our dictator undermines other essential needs, such as the need for a rewarding professional life.

We could imagine our dictator embodying some further paternalist features. For some, included in the political paternalism viewpoint is the idea that some people do not manage to reflect on a specific topic properly. As Le Grand and New explain: "[…] one key aspect of government paternalism is that it involves an intervention whose rationale is to address a failure of judgment or reasoning of an individual, at least as perceived by the government" (Le Grand and New, 2015, p. 16). Hence, we could say that our dictator believes that his fellow-citizens' reaction against his law is a sign of immaturity. As I take it, this recalls Sigal R. Ben-Porath who reminds us that many people share the view that "paternalism is objectionable because it means that policy makers treat adult members of the community as if they were children" (2010, p. 26). Others, such as Mark Schroeder, would probably react against this position by proposing that "paternalism is not a matter of treating someone like a child, but rather

a matter of treating someone like you are their parent" (Schroeder, 2022, p. 73). I believe that our dictator is closer to the first category, in the sense that he acts self-sacrificially for people who cannot realise that they need his help (always according to what *he* thinks). Thus, as I noted, his law can be conceived of as an act of *care*. But is it an act of love?

I think that one of the merits of this dictator-example is that it shows us that this question is not easy. On the one hand, serving the needs of others or caring about others does not necessarily render someone a loving individual. Hence, one should be very cautious before one includes our dictator's practices in the loving acts list. However, what *could* be argued is that, in this example, love is among the possibilities that remain *open*. While in the case of Mussolini it was quite easy to dismiss his persecution practices as non-loving practices, the dictator's example is more challenging. After all, things such as caring about the fulfillment of the needs of the other are certainly among the features that (according to some interpretations) belong to love (see for instance in King, 2010, p. 95). The same is true for self-sacrifice, as I have shown in Chapter 3. To be sure, someone errs if they simply rely on only these features, in order to make up their minds. In other words, our dictator does *not* qualify to be labeled "loving" simply by virtue of serving others, or because he sacrifices his public image. However, what is important for my analysis is that the "love-door" does *not* remain entirely closed here. It is *possible* that love is the reason that our dictator sacrifices his public image to serve the needs of his people. Again, it is not essential, but it is *possible*.

In my view, however, this is precisely when the need for precision and thoroughness becomes apparent. Specifically, I argue that the more we delve into our political discussion of love, the more tools we obtain to judge whether the love possibility must be considered an *open* possibility in this challenging example. The demand for rigorous

and comprehensive analysis of love was not that crucial in Mussolini's example—mere intuition could do the job too. Yet, here, things are significantly different. I think that, according to some particular interpretations of love, our dictator's example has some important red flags. Despite our leader's embodying features that are usually understood as features of love (serving, self-sacrifice), I argue that some detailed views on the concept forbid us to consider the love possibility an *open* possibility in this example. From this standpoint, it is *impossible* to label our dictator's paternalist practices acts of love. However, what is important for this analysis is that the success of these views depends upon them being thorough and precise.

According to my interpretation, some scholars would certainly dismiss both Mussolini's and our benevolent dictator's practices as fundamentally non-loving. In my view, an educational thinker who would probably react this way is Maria Montessori—a contemporary with Mussolini. Although Montessori was not a proponent of fascism she collaborated with Mussolini's regime on educational matters (Gutek, 2004, p. 37). As Gerald Lee Gutek puts it in his fine biographical introduction on Montessori's work, the "co-operation between Mussolini's Fascist government and Montessori was always uneasy" (ibid., p. 37) and resulted in her fleeing Italy "as an exile" in 1934 (ibid., p. 37). According to my interpretation, Montessori's understanding of love is particularly relevant for my discussion.

To be sure, even a quick look at her works can convince someone that politics were not the key topic of her research. Indeed, Montessori does not refer to it extensively. Hence, this may cause someone to be skeptical of the idea that, like Mussolini, Montessori envisioned a type of "loving citizen." One may object to this, claiming that there are some parts of her work where she invites us to construct the image of a loving citizen. For instance, some may trace this image behind phrases such as: "Our will to

power and possession enslaves us, and instead of a human society based on love and justice we have a society in which all men must hide behind masks in order to love" (Montessori, 2007, as cited in Frierson, 2022, p. 209). Although I do not suggest that it would be a stretch to portray Montessori as someone who cares for the creation of a loving citizen, I will limit myself to what I take to be the essence of this phrase, which is confirmed by other parts of her work too: Montessori believes that humans must love one another.

A good question for someone who is interested in precision and thoroughness is: What does Montessori's "love" mean? For Patrick, R. Frierson, "Montessori uses love as a near-synonym for solidarity," and thus one should think that the two notions are very close to one another (Frierson, 2022, p. 210). Yet, delving into works such as her *The Absorbent Mind* (1949), one cannot fail to notice that the author's account of love goes way beyond the idea of solidarity.

In this book, Montessori makes a rather unusual claim. She suggests that parental love "ought to be the ideal moral attitude of the adult community, because only here can be found love that naturally inspires self-sacrifice." She goes on to say that this kind of love "inspires the dedication of an ego to somebody else, the dedication of one's self to the service of other beings" (1949, p. 44). For the author, despite its self-sacrificial aspects, parental love is rewarding since it brings delight to parents (ibid., p. 45). Hence, if I understand this correctly, according to Montessori serving others, as well as self-sacrifice are the two core features of parental love that should be adapted to fit all aspects of human life.

I am quite happy to agree with those who would think that this version portrays parental love at its best, and that Montessori may idealise it here. After all, not all parents necessarily love their children. Yet, if we leave this worry aside, it would not be

an exaggeration to assume that, according to Montessori, the quintessential mode of co-existence between humans requires each person to serve others but also to be ready to sacrifice themselves for their fellow human beings.

A reader of Montessori may also quite plausibly think that her emphasis on the idea of "self-sacrifice" and the concept of "service" relates to her Christian background. Montessori is not alone in this; in an educational context, the self-sacrificial spirit of *agape* is finely stressed by Marshall Gregory (2002, p. 17). Referring to his students, Gregory notes that *agape* calls him "to be open to the possibility of self-sacrifice on their behalf, when and if appropriate circumstances demand it" (Gregory, 2002, p. 17). Given that Montessori herself refers to the Christian version of love (see for instance her references to Paul's account on love; 1949, p. 415), I think that it is correct to assume that her faith influenced her choice to focus on these two elements of (what she describes as) parental love.

Notice the similarities between Montessori's case and the example of our benevolent dictator. As I pointed out, the law of our politician aims at serving his fellow citizens. Also, the dictator acts in a self-sacrificial way, in the sense that he does not care about his deteriorating image. In my view, the fact that Montessori's account of love dismisses the practices of our dictator as non-loving becomes apparent after an examination of her notion of "service." Indeed, what counts as proper "service"? How far must one go to serve the needs of someone else? According to my reading, the response to this question requires us to leave *The Absorbent Mind* aside and turn to her *Spontaneous Activity in Education*. In this specific work, I believe that Montessori implies that proper service requires the respect of one's freedom, and possibly, one's autonomy.

Specifically, when she refers to the relationship between children and adults, Montessori calls her readers to imagine themselves as "slaves" of some "gigantic

people" who are "incapable of understanding our feelings" (Montessori, 1917, p. 20). According to her example, these enormous beings treat people in ways that restrict their freedom. For instance, she writes that while they sit peacefully to have their meal, these huge people take over and force them to eat it so hurriedly that they struggled to "swallow" it (ibid. p. 21).

In Montessori's example, the coerced humans would openly react against the huge beings, not necessarily out of abhorrence, but because, according to the author, freedom in these contexts matters (ibid., p. 21). As she puts it: "It is this love of freedom which nourishes and gives well-being to our life, even in its most minute acts" (ibid., p. 21). Hence, while in *The Absorbent Mind* Montessori portrays the parent-children relation (or a very good version of it) as a model for human co-existence (loving service and self-sacrifice), in this specific book she uses a metaphor that refers exclusively to adults. Her point is that, like adults, children must be understood as humans who value freedom. Yet, what is important for my own analysis is that, in my reading, Montessori's example does not simply refer to a case where freedom is restricted. More particularly, this restriction occurs in a serving context: we have some "giants" who serve the *needs* of some other people (e.g. feeding them) by restricting their freedom. Moreover, it would not be a stretch for someone to argue that this example does not refer to freedom exclusively, but it touches the notion of autonomy too. In other words, in this case we have people whose freedom is restricted *without* their consent, which is precisely why they react.

This should make us think that when Montessori tells us that the parental relationship is relevant for inter-personal love among adults, to the extent that it is linked to self-sacrifice and the service of others, this service is not *any kind* of service. It is a type of service that does not undermine the freedom and the autonomy of others. Love, in my

reading of Montessori, is a process in which someone values both the liberty and the autonomy of the beloved, and this is also something which I think is implied in other, valuable descriptions of Montessorian love such as R.P Frierson's. Frierson refers to the love between adults and children writing that:

> To love another with this higher love is precisely to respect them properly, to acknowledge and attend to them as agents with their own characters, their own ways of striving for perfection for themselves and ultimately contributing to the advancement of the world. (Frierson, 2022, p. 208)

In my view, these new dimensions (autonomy, freedom) show us that Montessori's conception of love is much more precise and thorough than it looked at the beginning. Indeed, it is one thing to talk about self-sacrifice and service, and quite another to give much more detail about what counts as *proper* service. Hence, in my view, the more precise and thorough the description of the concept of love the better, for someone who wants to evaluate the practices of the dictators mentioned previously. If we accept that love is also about respecting one's autonomy, then what are the conclusions that one can reach about Mussolini and the benevolent dictator?

In my view, Montessori's love removes Mussolini's persecution practices from the list of loving actions. More particularly, throwing someone into prison for their political beliefs is equivalent to punishing them because they believe what they want to believe, therefore being the masters of their own selves. In this case, autonomy is undermined in unacceptable ways. Yet, apart from this, one could also point out that, by throwing them into prison, Mussolini subjected his political opponents to a state where some of their liberties were restricted without their own consent. We should always remember that, according to the notion of autonomy I described in Chapter 3, when someone

agrees with the restriction of some of their own liberties (e.g. because they want to enjoy another good) then one is still in the domain of autonomous self-determination.

Something similar could be argued about the paternalist intervention of our benevolent dictator. From my perspective, although the idea that paternalism is always linked to acts that interfere with one's autonomy and/or liberty is objectionable (see, for instance, a fine example about autonomy in Quong, 2011, p. 79-80), the case of our dictator is quite clear. Our benevolent leader underestimates the ability of his fellow-citizens to consider what is best for them, feeling the need to "cure" their ignorance. Hence, some may claim that by passing his highly unpopular law that bans sports like boxing without caring about his deteriorating public image, he serves (some) of the people's needs. Yet, one can hardly claim that he serves these needs in a way that respects people's freedom or autonomy. For he imposes a law that restricts many people's liberty to pursue certain actions, without their own consent.

There are certainly further reasons why one should be precise and thorough with the concept of love in political discussions. In my view, the example of Mussolini, the benevolent dictator, but also Montessori illustrates that part of why precision and thoroughness are required is because it allows us to assess challenging examples of political practices. In other words, these features help us consider whether some citizens acted in loving ways or not. In the next section, I will evaluate what I have described as Yannaras' *agapeic citizen*, by testing whether it is precise and thorough.

ii. The Yannarian *Agapeic* Citizen, Precision and Thoroughness

According to my interpretation (offered in Chapter 3), Yannaras' political communitarianism can be understood as a variant of Christian anarchism. Also, from

my point of view, the Trinitarian foundation of his politics brings Yannaras close to other political theologians who have expressed similar views. In my detailed analysis of the Trinitarian background of the concept of *agape*, I argued that, in Yannaras' perspective, for a law to be valid in the community, all members should freely accept it. Hence, in the context of this community the freedom and the autonomy of each citizen should be respected. This summarises the political background of the "citizen" who is required to love in Yannaras' case. In other words, when it comes to the notion of "citizen" one may think that Yannaras is quite precise. In my view the same could argued about the "loving" part.

Similar to Montessori, Yannaras is a thinker whose work contains many elements that help us understand what he means when he uses the term "love." This suggests that what I call the "agapeic citizen" is a fairly precise notion. More particularly, in my view, one of the merits of Yannaras' work is that when he refers to the idea of love, the Christian background behind the concept is quite clear. Indeed, the reader does not have to do a lot of work to uncover it. Hence, we must think that Yannaras' *agape* bears some classical, Christian features. As I noted in Chapter 3, in his *Freedom of Morality*, the author asks: "What is perfect love?" Then he uses a quote that shows us the way in which monk Agathon replied to this question: "Agathon said, I want to find a leper and give him my own body and take his. That is perfect love" (Isaac of Syria n.d., in Spanos, ed. as cited in Yannaras, 1984, p. 269).

In my view, this quote summarises some core features of *agape* that one finds throughout the Scriptures. When Jesus asks his disciples to develop *agapeic* relations (John 13:34) he does not leave them without any description of what he means. For instance, commenting on the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Ceslaus Spicq remarks that "the supreme revelation of the parable of the good Samaritan is that charity is

composed of *compassion* and *mercy*" (2006, p. 116). Jesus gives us more insight. Referring to John's Gospel, William V. Dych, reminds us that *agape* is related to "self-sacrifice" (1995, p. 37). In his own terms: "Such sacrifice is, indeed, the undoing of sin, for sin is the destruction of the bonds of love between humankind and God and among humankind, and love is the restoration of this bonds" (ibid., p. 37). Moreover, according to my own argument, Yannaras' "self-sacrifice" is even more precise and thorough in the sense that it implies a certain stance. More particularly, it refers to a stance that requires critical thought. As I argued in Chapter 3, critical thought can assist Yannaras' *agapeic* citizen in testing whether their motivations are egocentric or not. This reflective process helps them to assess whether their self-sacrificial acts are properly *agapeic* or not, since, as I argued, Yannaras is a thinker who would agree with those scholars claiming that not all types of self-sacrifice are compatible with the notion of *agape.*

In my view, while Yannaras' conception of love is precise in the sense that its Christian background is clear, it can become even more thorough. For instance, in Chapter 3 I argued that, from Yannaras' Trinitarian theology, one can reach some conclusions about the *agapeic* mode of existence of the Trinity. As I noted, according to my interpretation of Yannaras' work, the example of Jesus shows that He Himself (the Son) engages in an *agapeic* relationship with His Father. Yet, this relationship is also a *free* relationship. In simpler terms, no Person of the Trinity forces or compels another Person to do or be what they did not freely accept to do or be. From this, I applied this concept to human affairs (e.g. to Yannaras' political theology). In my view, this suggests that (my reading of) Yannaras' *agape* can become even more precise and thorough, through some ideas derived from Montessori's work.

In the preceding section, I pointed out that Montessori's loving service requires the respect of one's freedom and autonomy. I believe that this is quite relevant for Yannaras'

work too, especially because it fits with what I think his notion of *agape* stands for. In my view, Yannaras' opinion on the example of the benevolent dictator that I raised in the preceding section is not hard to guess: this dictator fails to love in a way that resembles Trinitarian *agape*. The reason is that this type of *agape* comes with freedom. Hence, as I read it, passing a law that aims to serve the needs of others cannot be a sign of a Yannarian-type of *agape*, if this law restricts their freedom or autonomy. Therefore, I believe that my interpretation of Yannaras' *agape* can be enhanced by what I consider to be Montessori's love. The addition of the link between service and respect of one's autonomy/freedom seems to be a suitable one, making the Yannarian account even more thorough and comprehensive: In my reading, Montessori reminds Yannaras that one of the cases in which love should respect freedom is when love is called to *serve* the beloved.

CHAPTER 6: THE YANNARIAN LINK BETWEEN *AGAPE* AND CRITICAL THOUGHT.

i. Another Possible Link Between *Agape* and Critical Thought

In my view, what I termed as "The Yannarian link between *agape* and critical thought" originates from a type of *agape* conceived as a critical process. More specifically, in this perspective, critical reflection is required in order for someone to test the nature of their motivations when it comes to self-sacrificial acts. Although I think that this view has some degree of truth, I nevertheless believe that it stems from a very limited conception of *agape*. Hence, in what follows, I will reconsider the

relationship between the two notions, offering some further reasons why critical thought can be very for useful for the *agapist.*

According to Edmund Santurri's text (2016, p. 181), some people agree on a very specific view of *agape*. For them, this virtue "cannot be reduced to self-sacrifice simpliciter" (ibid., p. 181). This entails that not all types of self-sacrifice are *agapeic*, and, thus, "agape judges some self-sacrifice inappropriate" (ibid., p. 181). In his description of the "internalist view" on self-sacrificial *agape*, Santurri writes that "for the internalist, Christian love marks necessarily a disposition to sacrifice self […]" (ibid., p. 181). I suggest that the very idea of "disposition" is interesting, because it relates to a very important feature of *agape*. Specifically, we must think that the *agapist* does not pursue self-sacrificial acts for their beloved all the time. They do so only when a suitable opportunity arises. I think that this view relates to Marshall Gregory's paper on education (2002), where he analyses the relationship between the *agapeic* teacher and their students. The reason why I believe that there is a potential overlap between the two views is because Gregory uses terms such as "possibility" (Gregory, 2002, p. 17). More particularly, Gregory's teacher should remain "[…] open to the possibility of self-sacrifice on their behalf, when and if appropriate circumstances demand it" (ibid., p. 17). Hence, in my view, one could argue that in *agapeic* contexts, self-sacrificial acts are required only sometimes. They are not *always* necessary. Instead, in my view, what is *always* necessary for the person aspiring to be an *agapist*, is to do what Gregory mentions in his text when he refers to his students; that is, to remain "open" to this "possibility" (ibid., p. 17).

Therefore, I believe that these thoughts summarise the basic assumption from which I depart in this section: Self-sacrificial acts are simply one aspect of *agape*. We may love others, but the fact that sometimes we do not pursue self-sacrificial acts for them

(because there is no such need), does not mean we stop loving them. As I noted, Santurri tells us that according to some, this virtue "cannot be reduced to self-sacrifice simpliciter" (ibid., p. 181) – and rightly so. Yet, in my view, this phrase is interesting because it can be read in two ways. According to the first approach, this view makes clear that some self-sacrificial acts must be removed from the *agape* list. If I understand this correctly, this approach is closer to the message that Santurri wants to convey with this phrase. However, I suggest that there is a second approach, which is equally important; according to this, *agape* is not only about self-sacrificial acts, but also about other things. For instance, as I will discuss here, much like Montessori's notion of love, *agape* often asks us to identify the needs of the beloved and to find the more suitable way to serve these needs.

Based on this assumption, I believe that what I call the "Yannarian link between *agape* and critical thought" can be significantly improved. Specifically, one could add to this view that the self-sacrificial aspect is not the only aspect of *agape* where critical thought is required. Hence, according to the view that I will defend here, *agape* calls Yannaras' citizens to use their critical faculties in cases that do not necessarily relate to self-sacrifice. I will now explain the concept of meeting the needs of others within the context of *agape*, offering some more details on the topic.

It seems like it is common knowledge that being an *agapist* involves meeting the needs of the beloved. Martin Luther King Jr. writes that "when I am commanded to love, I am commanded to restore community, to resist injustice, and to meet the needs of my brothers" (King, 2010, p. 95). Serving the needs of the beloved must be conceived of as part of a general concern about the well-being of the beloved. The position found in Gene Outka's important study on *agape* is right and suitable for my discussion; "The agapist is formally at liberty to distinguish between needs and preferences, for example,

and contend that both count in regarding the neighbor's well-being" (Outka, 1972, p. 92). In my own discussion, I will exclusively focus on the concept of needs.

For some people, the very *way* in which we serve the needs of the beloved plays an important role in *agape*. To be sure, this is not an entirely new idea in this thesis. In section i (Chapter 5), I proposed that we should interpret Montessori as an author who called us to love by respecting the liberty and autonomy of the beloved. In the context of Orthodox Christian spirituality (from which Yannaras largely draws) I believe that one can find further views on this topic. For instance, consider cases like Ephraim's [Ephraim of Philotheou (1928-2019)], a contemporary Christian monk. One of the finest sayings of this monk was that "αγάπη [*agape*][35] (Ephraim, 2004, p. 402) is not about "το τί δίνεις [what you give]" [ibid., p. 402) but about "πῶς τό δίνεις [how you give it]" (ibid., p. 402).

To be sure, Ephraim's text is not a systematic treatise on *agape*. However, in my view, his description agrees with some contemporary philosophical depictions of love. For instance, Irving Singer's phrasing is particularly relevant because it contains the term "response": "Love is a way of valuing something. It is a positive response toward the "object of love" – which is to say, anyone or anything that is loved" (Singer, 1984, p. 3). I think that Ephraim would agree with Singer's formulation, although he would probably add another feature. One way in which the *agapist* should "respond" is by serving the needs of others, acting in a way that does not offend them. According to my reading, this view is implied in Ephraim's example about giving money to the needy. More particularly, by using a brief quote from Paul's second epistle to Corinthians, Ephraim implies that the act of *agapeic* giving must meet a certain requirement. For

[35] My translation from Greek. This applies to all Ephraim quotes.

Ephraim, as an *agapist* giver you must not "προσβάλλεις [offend]" (2004, p. 402) others. This idea is very interesting for my own treatment of *agape*.

As I take it, Ephraim implies that not every act of giving money to those in need is properly *agapeic*. Instead, by adding this requirement, I believe Ephraim portrays *agape* as a process that can be quite challenging. I suggest that we could also infer this from phrases such as; "Αλλά η αγάπη είναι διάκρισις και η διάκρισις είναι τέχνη" [But *agape* is discernment and discernment is an art] (Ephraim, 2004, p. 405). In other words, to love properly is not simply to perform acts that aim at serving the needs of others; we must also find the suitable way to perform these acts (and this is not always easy). This is where critical thought becomes part of the equation.

Robert H. Ennis argues that critical thought can be described as "reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do. The emphasis is on reasonableness, reflection, and the process of making decisions" (Ennis, 1996, p. 166). I believe that the idea of "reflective thinking" is particularly relevant for my point. Take an example that is slightly different to Ephraim's discussion. Someone loves another person by exercising *agape*. One day they find out that their beloved needs money even if they do not express it openly. The *agapist* wants to give money to the beloved, but they want to meet the requirement set by Ephraim's monastic experience, that is, about not offending others. In my view, finding the most suitable way to give them the money can be quite tricky. Specifically, the *agapist* of my example may have to enter a process, in the context of which critical, "reflective thinking" (to use Ennis' terms again; ibid. p. 166), is quite important. For instance, before they act, the *agapist* may need to reflect critically on the very nature of their relation between themselves and the beloved. To be sure, the fact that the *agapist* loves the other does not entail that the other responds to this love. After all, as Ronald M. Green puts it, "a hallmark of the Christian ethic"

(2016, p. 356) is for love to be directed even to the enemy. In simpler terms, the *agapist* may have to think about the other's stance: Do they love them to the same degree? Do they remain indifferent? Do they hate them?

Further, they may have to critically reflect on possible modes of action, excluding from the list those ones that are more likely to cause misunderstanding. For instance, a bad scenario would be for the *agapist* to give the money in front of other people, or, not making sure that the other gets the message that this act will remain between them; or to give the money in a way in which the beloved feels that they indirectly "asked" for it through a past behaviour; or to give the money in a way that shows that the giver is pursuing a great, self-sacrificial act that comes with a significant, personal cost, for someone who never asked for it; or to give the money in a way that conveys the message that the *agapist* expects something in return. These are some possible modes of action that the *agapist* of our example may have to critically reflect on, while forming their strategy – that is, prior to deciding on what counts as an appropriate action that meets the requirement I mentioned.

Moreover, if the *agapist* knows the beloved well, they might need to design their strategy after reflecting on the distinct character of the beloved. For instance, they may make judgements based on past experiences such as whether the beloved gets easily offended or how open they are in receiving help from others. Some may wish to add that, apart from critical reflection, skills like empathy play an important role in such cases. From this point of view, assessing what is more or less likely to cause problems may require a brief reflection on the other's character, for which empathy can be quite crucial. However, what is important for my analysis is that critical thought is quite crucial in cases where *agape* asks us to meet certain requirements. I think that it would not be an exaggeration to assume that for the proponents of the "no-offence"

requirement (such as Ephraim), the *agapist* of my example must not cause more problems than what they try to solve. I believe that the type of critical thought suggested by Robert H. Ennis, i.e., the "reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do" (Ennis, 1996, p. 166) can help the *agapist* avoid this. Hence, in my view, my analysis invites the reader to think about an additional link between *agape* and critical thought—a link that goes well beyond the idea of motivations I discussed in Chapter 3.

In simpler terms, one way in which (what I described as) Yannaras' philosophy of education can be improved is by a very specific addition. In my interpretation, this type of education should aim at citizens who are *agapists*. What I add here is that these *agapists* might have to use their critical faculties in ways that Yannaras' work misses. Some could even argue that this view presupposes that Yannaras' citizens should try to develop certain character elements. For instance, Diane E. Halpern, who thinks that "critical thinking is purposeful, reasoned, and goal-directed" (1998, p. 450) writes about specific "dispositions or attitudes" (ibid., p. 452) that one often finds in people who think critically. Specifically, she refers to features such as their "willingness to engage in and persist at a complex task" (ibid., p. 452) or their "flexibility or open-mindedness" (ibid., p. 452). Also, I am fairly sure that since *agape* is a very rich concept, one could identify some further ways in which critical thought fits. In my view, the dimension I defended in this section is sufficient to improve what I suggest to be Yannaras' position.

ii. Love and Critical Thought in Education: Nussbaum and Yannaras

In this section I will show that Martha Nussbaum can help us improve the educational approach that I presented in the first part of the thesis. My discussion is going to focus

on Nussbaum's treatment of patriotism (love of one's country). Given that when it comes to Yannaras' work I have mainly focused on an interpersonal type of love (*agape*), mentioning patriotism may seem like I open an entirely new discussion here. Indeed, one may claim that the two loves have some differences, and this could be considered among the limitations of my analysis. However, although I will refer to Nussbaum's patriotic love, I will not compare it with Yannaras' *agape.* The reason why I believe that Nussbaum's insights can be valuable for my discussion is because her thoughts on education include a very specific link between love and critical thought. In my view, if this link is adjusted to fit the Yannarian approach I suggested in the first part, then this approach is going to be significantly enhanced.

Nussbaum is well known for addressing the link between emotions and politics (love in particular) in a very thorough way. In my view, her *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice* (2013) remains perhaps one of the most important works in this area. Interestingly, according to my reading, this specific book reveals that Nussbaum defends a type of love which is closely linked to critical thought. In my view, the way in which she touches this subject is through her reference to Rousseau's work. Nussbaum accuses Rousseau of suggesting a type of "civic love" which is "incompatible with active critical thought about the political order, and with a sense of the separateness of the individual from the group" (Nussbaum, 2013, p. 45). Rousseau's love, writes Nussbaum, is a kind of "love of the nation and its laws" (ibid., p. 45) as well as "a type of fraternity grounded in unanimity and homogeneity" (ibid., p. 45). According to Nussbaum's reading, for Rousseau, all citizens must agree to sacrifice their lives for the "nation" (ibid., p. 45), yet without "thinking critically about the plan for war, and whenever the sovereign body of citizens so decrees" (ibid., p. 45). This means that this type of love involves a strongly emotional aspect that undermines the

use of critical reflection, which is not a top priority in this context (ibid., p. 45). For example, one may think that Nussbaum's references to this self-sacrificial aspect of love are reminiscent of cases where zealous, unconditional loyalty "sabotages" judgment. Is this the only way to practice patriotic love? Nussbaum would certainly say no.

More particularly, her references to education show that she believes that patriotism must be balanced with critical thought. In a chapter entitled *Teaching Patriotism: Love and Critical Freedom* (2013), Nussbaum refers again to the "patriotic sentiment" (2013, p. 206). Although she defends the position that the "patriotic emotion" (ibid., p. 207) has some social significance, she does not blame those who "look skeptically on appeals to patriotic sentiment" (ibid., p. 206); in other words, Nussbaum believes that those who argue that education should have different priorities, such as the creation of "citizens who can think for themselves" and rely on reason to think about "the nation's future" have their merits (ibid., p. 206).

One may point out that the reason why she does not dismiss these worries as insignificant is because she thinks that education should prioritise "[…] the formation of a citizen who is both loving and critical […]" (2012, p. 249). This is why, if I understand this correctly, Nussbaum suggests that the development of "patriotism" in schools should be parallel to the cultivation of critical thought (ibid.. p. 251). More particularly, the author proposes that education should *start* by cultivating love towards one's country, because "children will not be good dissenters in or critics of a nation unless they first care about the nation and its history" (ibid., p. 250). Yet, parallel to this, according to Nussbaum, education should also focus on promoting "critical thinking" (ibid., p. 251) in different contexts, and later, encourage students to combine it with their love. In her own terms "critical thinking can be taught with any content,

but at some point it is good to move it onto the stage of the patriotic narrative itself" (ibid., p. 251).

Therefore, even though Nussbaum acknowledges that patriotic love can be dangerous for one's critical thought, her views on education show us that these dangers are not unavoidable. The development of love and critical thinking, which, according to my understanding, is described as a parallel process, can lead to what Nussbaum describes as "a critical yet loving patriotism" (ibid., p. 250). This type of love does not lead the loving individual to avoid standing critically against the country when this is necessary – which is also why Nussbaum rejects the idealisation of history (ibid., p. 255). Specifically, she argues that "patriots" (ibid., p. 255) are usually the ones who are guilty of such a mistake, and she worries a lot about the type of "love" (ibid., p. 255) that this patriotic position implies: it is a kind of "love" that is incapable of facing the actual nature of the beloved, avoiding admitting that the "nation" is not ideal (ibid., p. 255). This type of love Nussbaum describes as "a terrible starting point for the education of a nation's children" (ibid., p. 255). In other words, education should aim at critical thought especially *because* it aims at a love that does not idealise.

According to my suggestion, Nussbaum's scepticism against Rousseau's "civic love" (Nussbaum, 2013, p. 45) along with her interesting views on education and patriotism; can significantly improve what I described as Yannaras' philosophy of education. In other words, I argue that if her syllogism is applied to the Yannarian approach I suggested, then it can give some valuable insights. In the first part of this thesis, I argued that: A) Yannaras is a thinker who suggests that the development of critical thought should be among the aims of education. More particularly, I have shown that in his view, this skill is important for contemporary life in the context of which individuals come across thousands of pieces of online information; B) I have also argued that, based

on Yannaras' criticism of the Greek educational system, as well as his philosophy and his theology, one can reach some conclusions about his views on education. I suggested that one of the aims of Yannaras' education should be the creation of citizens who practice *agape*; C) I have also argued that, in Yannaras' work, *agape* should be conceived of as a process that often requires critical thought. More specifically, I reached this conclusion by interpreting Yannaras' references to *agapeic* self-sacrifice.

Based on these three claims, I now argue that Nussbaum's treatment of patriotic love offers us an important link to significantly improve (what I described as) Yannaras' philosophy of education. More specifically, the Yannarian approach can be significantly improved by an important addition: the cultivation of critical thought in education must not be conceived of as a task which is irrelevant to *agape.* In simpler terms, education should develop critical thought for various reasons (e.g. evaluation of online information). However, educators should be aware that at least *one* of these reasons has to do with *agape* – a process that often requires critical thought. In this context it is because they educate for *agape* that they should aim at critical thinking. To be sure, Nussbaum's position is not entirely the same as the Yannarian approach I defend in this thesis. Yet, if someone adjusts it to fit in, I believe that it offers us a valuable link between love, critical thought, and education: critical thought and *agape* must not be conceived of as two entirely separate educational goals, since the former supports and serves the latter. In other words, the future *agapist* citizen is likely to face some situations where practicing *agape* requires critical skills. Education should prepare them for this. This is precisely how Nussbaum's ideas can improve the Yannarian approach discussed in the first part of the thesis. The very formation of the *agapist* citizen serves as an additional reason why critical thought is necessary.

CHAPTER 7: THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER: HANNAH ARENDT IN DIALOGUE WITH YANNARAS

i. A Brief Note on the "Teacher"

In my presentation of Yannaras' philosophical reflection on education I briefly referred to the idea of the "teacher." More specifically, in Chapter 4, I defended the view that Yannaras' philosophy of education includes a type of teacher who teaches their students in a pleasant way, aiming to deliver what I described as "captivating courses." As I pointed out, a possible interpretation is that this teacher highlights the attractive aspects of the courses they teach.

Based on the theory I defended in the first part, I believe that one should reach some further conclusions about the Yannarian teacher. Departing from my interpretation of Yannaras' politico-theological position, one could argue that this teacher must be part of the political community envisioned by Yannaras. This suggests something very specific: this teacher is going to be a citizen who practices *agape*. Also, it would not be an exaggeration to assume that this type of *agape* is directed to their students too. Throughout the secondary literature on education, one can find some valuable suggestions about what it means for a teacher to apply *agape* to their relationship with their students. Marshall Gregory (whose work I have briefly used before in this thesis) offers us three valuable points. He argues that;

> In Christian terms, to love my students 'as I have loved you', demands that I relate to them according to the three features of agape: first, to be unconditionally committed to their good; second, to have regard for the well-being of all of them equally; and, third, to be open to the possibility of self-sacrifice on their behalf, when and if appropriate circumstances demand it. (Gregory, 2002, p. 17)

One could argue that the teacher who loves their students in the mode of *agape* is quite far from being the "pleasant guy" who does all kinds of favours for their students. Judging from the interesting example he provides I think that Stein M. Wivestad would probably agree with my comment;

> Agape as compassion may help an adult to continue giving necessary learning challenges to a child, such as when the child (for certain unknown causes, for instance very bad experiences with adults) reacts with ingratitude, harsh words or even complains about the adult to others. (Wivestad, 2008, p. 321)

In my view, the insights offered by Gregory and Wivestad help us to imagine Yannaras' teacher. I believe that they provide us with equally possible scenarios, since both views can be compatible with the Yannarian approach I suggested. To be sure, some may wish to take the claim of *agape* a bit further, arguing that Yannaras' view about the attractiveness of courses must not be understood as distinct from his commitment to the virtue of *agape.* Thus, one may wish to add that the Yannarian teacher wants their courses to be captivating especially *because* they practice *agape.*

Perhaps the connection could be made through the idea of "well-being" mentioned by Gregory in the quote above (2002, p. 17). Gene Outka's phrasing about needs and preferences is, again, relevant; "The agapist is formally at liberty to distinguish between needs and preferences, for example, and contend that both count in regarding the neighbor's well-being" (Outka, 1972, p. 92). Therefore, building on these views, one could argue that: A) The teacher loves their students in an *agapeic* mode; B) *agape* cares about the well-being of the beloved; C) in *some cases*, the well-being of the beloved is served by satisfying their own preferences. Therefore, the *agapeic* teacher cares if their students like their courses, acting towards this goal.

In my view, the image of the teacher who loves their students is a direct implication of Yannaras' philosophy and theology (both discussed in the first part of the thesis) and this why I believe that we have many reasons to accept it. The same applies to the link between *agape* and the teacher's desire for their students to receive captivating learning experiences. What certainly requires more discussion is whether this link can be founded upon the notion of "well-being." However, I am not going to open this topic here. The basic reason is that there are much more important points that one should make about the Yannarian teacher. In the next sections, I will explore the educational thought of Hannah Arendt. As I will argue, Arendt's ideas can significantly enhance the Yannarian approach I discussed in the first part of my thesis.

Arendt's insights appear in several studies in the philosophy of education – for instance, some writings of Gert Biesta (e.g. 2010; 2016) come quickly to one's mind. When it comes to Yannaras' approach, I believe that Arendt's work provides us with concepts that help us improve the notion of the "teacher." As I will explain, Arendt's teacher is a loving citizen but not in the *agapeic* sense of the term, which I defended in my discussion of Yannaras. Despite this difference, however, I think that Arendt's

conception of the role of the teacher includes a political dimension that is valuable for the Yannarian context. Therefore, in what follows, I will briefly present some ideas found in Arendt's work. Firstly, I will address her rejection of love as a political virtue. Then, I will proceed with presenting her own political love which is closely related to her educational philosophy. After the critical presentation of these features, I will turn again to the Yannarian approach I defended in the first part of my thesis, showing why Arendt's insights are valuable.

ii. Love and Politics in a Continental Philosophy Context: Arendt Against Yannaras

Despite their differences, Yannaras and Arendt have many things in common. For instance, they both belong to the continental philosophical tradition of the 20th century. This is also the era during which both produced their most important works. To the best of my knowledge, there is no historical evidence that the two philosophers met each other. However, it is safe to assert that both were influenced by phenomenology, a trend in continental philosophy that appeared in the early 20th century. The work of Martin Heidegger is certainly a source from which both derived some of their ideas. For instance, while in works such as the *Person and Eros*, the echoes of Heidegger are to be traced back even to the very title of the book (the two terms joined together by Yannaras are clearly an imitation of Heidegger's *Being and Time,* 2001); Arendt is usually described as "one of Heidegger's and Jaspers's most brilliant students" (Hinchman and Hinchman, 1984, p. 185), who formed part of her philosophical vocabulary, influenced by this specific book of Heidegger (see the discussion about concepts such as 'worldiness' or 'worldlessness' in Hinchman and Hinchman,1984, p. 197).

To be sure, Heidegger's philosophical vocabulary is not the most accessible and "easy to grasp" terminology that one finds in continental philosophy. Reading and understanding Heidegger requires (at least) some familiarity with technical terms invented by Heidegger himself – e.g. "Being-there-too" (Heidegger, 2001, p. 154) or "Dasein" (ibid., p. 41), etc. Although Yannaras and Arendt are a bit easier to read, one should keep in mind that they both belong to a philosophical tradition that prefers a type of philosophical writing, which is often significantly different from the one encountered in contemporary analytic philosophy. This is a first important note that I should make before I discuss Arendt's views. The reason why this point is essential is that, like Heidegger or Yannaras, Arendt uses her own, distinct terminology.

The second note that I should make refers to the link between love and politics. As I pointed out, the reason why I believe that Arendt is relevant for my analysis is because she provides us with a valuable conceptualisation of the role of the teacher. More particularly, we should keep in mind that Arendt's teacher is a loving citizen. However, given that, as I argued, Yannaras' work offers us many reasons to think that his teacher is also a loving citizen, it is very important to note that the two types of love are significantly different. In my interpretation of Yannaras' work, love applies to politics in a very specific way: a member of a certain polity (a citizen) must exercise a certain type of love (*agape*). In Arendt's case things are much more complicated. This topic requires special consideration because Arendt's position differs from the Greek philosopher's, and Arendt would probably *reject* Yannaras' *agapeic* citizen. This creates a significant gap between the two authors that must not be ignored when one tries to bring their work into a creative dialogue.

As I will argue in the next section, on the one hand, Arendt defends a type of citizen-love that relates to the notion of the "teacher." This type of love is directed towards

what she calls the "world," a term with political connotations. One the other hand, however, in some parts of her work, Arendt rejects any connection between love and politics. For instance, in her *The Human Condition* she asserts that "love […] is not only apolitical but antipolitical, perhaps the most powerful of all antipolitical human forces" (Arendt, 1998, p. 242). Similarly, in her letter to James Baldwin, Arendt writes that, in such contexts, "love is a stranger" (Arendt, 2006, p. 1). Therefore, one should take for granted that Arendt is a philosopher who distances herself from Yannaras' political commitments.

Explaining Arendt's argument against political love requires analysing various aspects of her work. Although I will avoid this analysis here, I am tempted to note that this argument presupposes an oversimplified version of love—this is quite surprising given that Arendt began her intellectual career as a love-thinker, as I will also discuss later. Instead of providing a detailed clarification of Arendt's position, I will only offer a hint about what is problematic about political love according to the philosopher. First, as Sean Kim Butorack tells us, Arendt believes that love threatens "plurality" (2018, p. 711). Another point raised by Gregory is that, according to Arendt, love can be dangerous for liberty (2001, p. 162). The third reason why Arendt removes love from politics is that a proper political virtue should involve thinking, in the sense that it must not be too emotional. Among the three claims against political love, I will briefly discuss the last one. From this point of view, Arendt needs to be conceived as a philosopher who is largely committed to the idea that love bears a strongly emotional aspect. In simpler terms, when we love, we mostly *feel* things.

Shin Chiba summarises very well the types of love that Arendt has in mind when she rejects the link between love and politics. He tells us that Arendt refers to "specific forms of love: pity, fraternity, compassion, and romantic love" (Chiba, 1995, p. 510)

but also “Christian love” (ibid., p. 517). To be sure, Arendt’s rejection of *agape* per se leaves no room for doubt that she would disagree with Yannaras’ political philosophy. Chiba notes that, for Arendt, love is a “sentiment” (ibid., p. 511), and thus, “all kinds of love are […] prone to emotional bias and passionate outburst, they are harmful to the political world” (ibid., p. 511). Chiba’s observation is correct. For instance, in her *The Human Condition* Arendt tells us that “love” involves “passion” (1998, p. 242).

It seems plausible to think that Arendt prefers her citizens to acquire virtues which, according to her, are less emotional than love. This view is revealed by her distinction between “solidarity” and “pity,” to which Chiba also refers (1995, p. 511). This distinction is found in Arendt’s *On Revolution*. The reason why Arendt prefers “solidarity” from “pity” is because she thinks that “solidarity” involves “reason” (Arendt, 1990, p. 88).

According to the philosopher, it is “pity” that motivates humans to focus on the powerless. Yet, “it is out of solidarity that they establish deliberately and, as it were, dispassionately a community of interest with the oppressed and exploited” (Arendt, 1990, p. 88). On the one hand “pity” is more of a “sentiment,” (ibid., p. 89), whereas “solidarity […] partakes of reason, and hence of generality” (ibid., p. 88). According to Arendt’s argument, “pity, in contrast to solidarity, does not look upon both fortune and misfortune, the strong and the weak, with an equal eye” (ibid., p. 89). Arendt points that our “pity” is triggered by the sad situation in which some people find themselves: “without the presence of misfortune, pity could not exist” (ibid., p. 89). On the other hand, “solidarity” is more critical, allowing us to think more widely (ibid., p. 88). In her own words: “For solidarity, because it partakes of reason hence of generality, is able to comprehend a multitude conceptually not only the multitude of a class or a nation or a people, but eventually all mankind” (ibid., p. 88).

Chiba argues that a possible interpretation of Arendt's position is that "the political principle of solidarity is contrasted to, and regarded as incompatible with, every kind of love which is understood as sentiment" (ibid., p. 511). He also describes Arendt's "love" as "a sentiment or an emotion" that basically "tends to form an inner circle of lovers by love's inherent private, closely knit, and homogeneous features" (Chiba, 1995, p. 506). It would not be an exaggeration to claim that other approaches of Arendt's work, such as Eric Gregory's (2008), acknowledge this emotional character of love: "Arendt's misamorism, and the image of the citizen it promotes, is particularly acute because of her reaction to what she sees as the negative effects of sentimentalism on political action" (2008, p. 204). In my view, one reason why these readings are valuable is because they help us clarify the message that Arendt wants to convey when she uses phrases such as "love, by reason of its passion […]" (Arendt, 1998, p. 242).

The very brief overview offered in this section sufficiently shows why someone needs to be extra cautious when they attempt to bring Arendt and Yannaras into a dialogue about politics. Despite their shared phenomenological starting point, Arendt's rejection of love as a political virtue creates an insurmountable gap between the two political philosophies. Yet, as I pointed out in the beginning, Arendt's emphatical rejection does not tell the whole story. I will now turn to show that Arendt ends up defending her own type of loving citizen. It is this citizen that is particularly relevant and useful for assessing Yannaras' position, since it is closely related to the concept of the "teacher."

iii. Arendt's "Love": Democratic Politics and Education

Apart from their interest in phenomenology (especially Heidegger's work), Arendt's work shares another common feature with Yannaras' work. Both must be conceived as

philosophers who have criticised the work of St. Augustine. Each author criticised Augustine for their own reasons. Although I lack the space to discuss this thoroughly, I believe that Yannaras' treatments of Augustine are sometimes unfair, implying a rather limited reading of his long and complex work. Arendt's approach is entirely different, partly because she began her career as an Augustinian scholar. Quite famously, her PhD thesis examined the concept of love in St. Augustine's work (see for more her *Love and Saint Augustine*, 1996). This means that, unlike Yannaras, Arendt examined this body of work quite thoroughly. Also, while in Yannaras' books one will often find a sharp polemic against Augustine's thought (see for instance Yannaras, 2015a, p. 126), Arendt's stance towards Augustine's work was not exclusively critical. As I will show, according to some scholars, Arendt was influenced by Augustine's conception of love. This influence is particularly relevant for my work. Therefore, in what follows, I will briefly show that; a) Arendt's treatment of Augustine led her to develop her own theory of the loving citizen; and b) this love is closely linked to education but also to her conception of the role of the teacher. After clarifying these points, I will then move on to the next section, where I will show why this view on the teacher is valuable for my discussion of the Yannarian teacher.

In her analysis on Augustine, Arendt discusses two types of Augustinian love. Hence, we read about "*cupiditas,*" but also about "*caritas*" (Arendt, 1996, p. 18). For Arendt, the distinction between the two loves is based upon the "object alone" (ibid., p. 27), (she means, the object of love). As Sarah Elizabeth Spengeman puts in her fine treatment of Arendt's reception of Augustine's work, "*cupiditas*" is a love that is directed towards the things of this "world": "In longing to be happy, the desirer of the world, living in *cupiditas*, stumbles from one object to the next seeking satisfaction" (Spengenman, 2014, p. 124). Yet, according to Arendt's reading of Augustine, the

"temporal things […] can be lost, and death, the loss of the world, will deprive us of all of them" (Arendt, 1996. pp. 32-33). This means that humans that love in the form of "*cupiditas*" live a life of "fear;" this is, in Arendt's terms, the "fear of not obtaining what is desired and fear of losing it once it is obtained" (ibid., p. 35). On the contrary, according to Arendt's analysis of Augustine, "*caritas* knows no fear because it knows no loss" (ibid., p. 34), and thus "the sign of *caritas* on earth is fearlessness, whereas the curse of cupiditas is fear" (ibid., p. 35). As Spengeman puts it in her commentary, "*caritas*" is a love that is directed towards God (Arendt, 2003 as cited in Spengenman, 2014, p. 127), while God represents "the good that cannot be lost against our will" (Spengeman, 2014, p. 128). The idea that, unlike the surrounding world, God cannot "be lost" (ibid., p. 128) is probably one of the reasons why Arendt writes that "*caritas* is free precisely because it casts out fear (timorem Joras mittit) (Arendt, 1996, p. 23). Building on Arendt's idea that what keeps the two Augustinian loves apart is the "object" (ibid., p. 27), it would be helpful to clarify these insights using an example. Say that when we love in the "*cupiditas*" mode, we love our money. This love comes with the fear that at some point we may lose our money. In contrast, when we love in the "*caritas*" mode, we love God more than any other person or thing in the world, and since God is eternal, God "cannot be lost against our will" (Spengeman, 2014, p. 128). Thus, our love is not followed by any kind of "fear" (Arendt, 1996, p. 34).

According to some theorists (with whom I agree), Arendt's work on Augustine had not left her political works that followed unaffected (e.g. Spengeman, 2014, p. 1; Christopher Martin Caver, 2017, p. 72). Shin Chiba observes that Arendt adopts the Augustinian notion of "cupiditas" and transforms it into a significantly different concept. More particularly, according to Chiba, the philosopher

> turned the negative - generally speaking, but not always - meaning of Augustine's notion of *amor mundi* as the *cupiditas* or striving for temporal things into a positive meaning: citizens' dispassionate and yet dedicated commitment to the welfare of the world." (Chiba, 1995, pp. 531-532)

In simpler terms, in her later works, Arendt constructed her own idea of love towards what she terms "the world," (1961, p. 196) based on far less theological underpinnings than Augustine's. As Eric Gregory observes, "it is a love drained of religious affectivity or moral passion so as to be suitable for the responsibilities of the political world of action" (2008, p. 206). Apart from being significant for her political thought, Arendt's notion of love towards what she calls the "world" is a key concept of her educational philosophy as well. This is why it is important for my discussion. In one of the chapters of her *Between Past andFfuture: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (1961), entitled "The Crisis in Education," Arendt writes that;

> Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough […] to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world. (Arendt, 1961, p. 196)

What does love towards the "world" mean? What does the "world" itself mean? Although I am not going to offer a thorough analysis of this complex Arendtian notion, I will borrow a view from Julien Kloeg who has written on Arendt's educational

thought. Kloeg suggests that, for Arendt, "the world is produced by us" (2022, p. 198) but also that it is "produced by work" (ibid., p. 199). From this, we must infer that the idea of the "world" refers to something that humans create and sustain. A good way to clarify this idea further is to reflect upon a specific component of this "world." In her *Crisis* chapter, Arendt uses the phrase "the public aspect of the world" (Arendt, 1961, p. 186). This "public aspect" must be understood as referring mainly to the political. This means that politics are part of a larger whole created by humans: one may think that humans create institutions, laws, political ideas, etc. As Chiba puts it: "For Arendt political life does not belong to the naturalistic, but to the artificial dimension of life […]" (1995, p. 508).

Seth Rosing DeLong suggests that Arendt's love for the "world" is linked to a specific type of politics. In DeLong's perspective, "in his own pathological way, Hitler believed he 'cared' for the world" (DeLong, 2004, p. 200). As proven by this specific study, Arendt's love of the world presupposes that "her public sphere must be a democratic one based on consent" (ibid., p. 212), being "incompatible with tyranny, theocracy and totalitarianism" (ibid., p. 212). Although this treatise is not a study in Arendt's philosophy of education per se, in my treatment of Arendt's philosophy of education I will rely on DeLong's conception of the Arendtian "public" (ibid., p. 212). In other words, I will take for granted that Arendt's "world" involves a "public aspect" (Arendt, 1961, p. 186) that can be placed in the (broad) category of democratic politics. In the context of these politics, "Arendtian citizens […] would justify their decisions by appealing to that which all citizens have in common, such as the democratic ideals of majority rule or the imperative to abide by procedures to which all have consented" (DeLong, 2004, p. 210). In my treatment of Arendt's educational thought, the political dimension is going to be the only component of the "world" that I will address.

Given that the Arendtian "world" is associated with politics, then what does it mean to love such a "world"? One thing we must take for granted is that, as I pointed out, although this type of love originates from Augustine's "cupiditas" the two concepts are not identical. Many people in the literature have attempted to interpret this type of love. For example, I already mentioned Chiba's interpretation, according to which, Arendt's 'love of the world' referred to the "dedicated commitment to the welfare of the world" (Chiba, 1995, p. 532). I also pointed out that for Eric Gregory, "it is a love drained of religious affectivity or moral passion so as to be suitable for the responsibilities of the political world of action" (2008, p. 206). Christopher Martin Caver adds that "courage and endurance are two other important benefits Arendt associates with a love of the world, ones that both facilitate political action and help us endure its outcomes, preserving the world into the future" (Caver, 2017, p. 97). Scholars like R.S. DeLong observe that the Arendtian notion is linked to elements such as one's "willingness to depend on his peers" (2004, p. 210). For DeLong: "Arendt's ideal citizen embraces rather than fears the mutuality and reciprocity that animate his relations with his peers in the public realm" (ibid., p. 210).

Although these interpretations do not refer to Arendt's educational philosophy per se, they certainly help us make sense of the complicated Arendtian notion. Notice, for instance, that Gregory's explanation refers to the "political world" (2008, p. 206), while DeLong's approach refers to the "public realm" (2004, p. 210). As we have seen, in Arendt's case, the public *is* the political, constituting an "aspect of the world" (Arendt, 1961, p. 186). Also, throughout her *Crisis* chapter, Arendt links the idea of "love" to the concept of "responsibility": "Education," says Arendt, "is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it" (Arendt, 1961, p. 196). Although this link between education, responsibility and love helps us advance

our understanding of Arendt's position, we cannot conceive of these ideas properly if we do not familiarise ourselves with her broader views on the role of education.

In her discussion about children, Arendt distinguishes the "public" from the "private" (ibid., p. 186). "Family" represents the "private" domain for children (ibid., p. 186). Children are not ready for the external "world" (the political included); they need the "security" that the "private" provides them with: "these four walls, within which people's private family life is lived, constitute a shield against the world" (ibid., p. 186). This is precisely when education becomes part of the equation, according to Arendt.

As one can infer from her *Crisis* chapter, Arendt thinks that one of the roles of education must be to help students pass "from the family to the world" (ibid., p. 189). More particularly, one must not hesitate to assume that Arendt thinks that the aim of education is profoundly political. As Rowena Azada-Palacios puts it in her treatment of Arendt, "the educational space was distinctive as an intergenerational social space where adults were meant to bear the important and delicate responsibility of initiating children into the political community" (2021, p. 575).

Notice that this is not an entirely new idea in this thesis. Specifically, it is very similar to Yannaras'. In simpler words, what the school must do is to progressively train students to live in a society that, as we have seen, has a "public aspect" (Arendt, 1961, p. 186). According to the author, "attendance there [she means the 'school'] is required not by the family but by the state, that is by the public world […]" (Arendt, 1961, p. 189), because "insofar as the child is not yet acquainted with the world, he must be gradually introduced to it" (Arendt, 1961, p. 189). Like Yannaras', Arendt's education should create citizens. To be sure, this does not entail that the two positions are entirely the same. Remember that in my treatment of Yannaras' philosophical reflection on education, I defended the idea that the role of education should be to create the citizens

of his own, Christian-anarchist political community. Thus, in my interpretation, it is not any type of citizenship that Yannaras aims at, but the one that meets the specific demands of a certain polity. When it comes to Arendt, however, I have chosen to follow DeLong's link between Arendt's love and democratic politics. In these politics, "Arendtian citizens […] would justify their decisions by appealing to that which all citizens have in common, such as the democratic ideals of majority rule or the imperative to abide by procedures to which all have consented" (DeLong, 2004, p. 210). Despite these differences, however, I will argue that part of the reason why Arendt's position is valuable for the Yannarian approach is because of this political aim that she sets for education.

So far, we have seen that the Arendtian "world" refers partly to politics. We have also seen that, from Arendt's point of view, education must help students pass from "family life" (Arendt, 1961, p. 186) to citizen-life. What remains to be clarified is the link between the Arendtian "love," the idea of "responsibility," and the "world:" "Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it" (ibid., p. 196). How should we interpret this idea? My reply to this question is that, by this link, Arendt refers to a specific kind of teacher. This teacher plays a crucial role in Arendt's education that aims to create citizens.

More particularly, the Arendtian teacher who is part of a school that helps students pass from "family life" (ibid., p. 186) to political life, must not be conceived as someone who simply teaches students specific courses. In other words, I agree with Viktor Swillens and Joris Vlieghe who argue that, according to Arendt's educational thought "a teacher is not someone who has proven to be a competent instructor or learning-manager. Didactical competences are only secondary […]" (2020, p. 1020). Instead, as the authors tell us, Arendt describes teachers "in terms of an attitude of love for the

world" (2020, p. 1020). Building on the author's view, one must not hesitate to claim that when Arendt writes that "education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it" (1961, p. 196), her reference implies a specific stance that teachers must adopt. More specifically, these teachers should be world-lovers – as Swillens and Vlieghe tell us (2020, p. 1020) – but this love entails that they "must assume responsibility" for it, even if they disagree with its current form (Arendt, 1961, p. 189). In Arendt's own words:

> In any case, however, the educators here stand in relation to the young as representatives of a world for which they must assume responsibility […] even though they may, secretly or openly, wish it were other than it is. (ibid., p. 189)

In other words, the teacher must help their students become part of a political reality for which they hold themselves accountable, even if they strongly believe that there are lots of things that must be improved. We must think that, according to Arendt, the teacher must not avoid this type of "responsibility" (ibid. p. 189). Yet, apart from the idea of responsibility, there is another interesting element that I think helps us imagine what it means for teachers to be world-lovers. According to some interpretations, Arendt's "love of the world" must be understood as the "citizens' dispassionate and yet dedicated commitment to the welfare of the world" (Chiba, 1995, p. 531-532). Although Chiba's approach does not refer to education, I believe that it is certainly relevant for Arendt's treatment of teachers. In my view, a good way to conceive of these elements is by applying them to Arendt's "public aspect of the world" (Arendt, 1961, p. 186); specifically, to democratic politics.

More particularly, one could claim that a teacher who "loves" democratic politics is not required to agree with the way in which democratic politics are practiced in their time and place. In my view, the Arendtian position implies that the teacher who wants to do their job properly should let their students know that they accept "responsibility" (ibid. p. 189) for democratic politics. According to my understanding, when Arendt observes that "the educators here stand in relation to the young as representatives of a world for which they must assume responsibility" (ibid., p. 189), she means a very specific thing: the future citizens (students) should somehow receive the message that the current citizens (teachers) accept "responsibility" (ibid., p. 189) for the strengths and weaknesses of the public for which they are being trained.

When thinking how Chiba's "commitment to the welfare of the world" (Chiba, 1995, p. 532) applies to my discussion of the teacher, we must not forget that Arendt's education aims at creating citizens. In my view, applying Chiba's insights to Arendt's teachers involves understanding that the teachers who love democratic politics must not reject these politics due to their deficiencies. Instead, they should perceive these politics as something subject to change. This approach is profoundly connected to the Arendtian notion of "renewal" (1961, p. 196). To be sure, the idea of "renewal" is a rather wide concept, the clarification of which requires the analysis of some further Arendtian notions such as "natality" (ibid., p. 196). Yet, in order to understand how this concept applies to the teacher who accepts responsibility for democratic politics, one simply needs to reply to two important questions: a) who is going to bring "renewal" in politics (the "world," ibid., p. 196)? and b) What kind of "renewal" (ibid., p. 196) is Arendt interested in?

In my view, Arendt's reply to the first question is certainly clear: she expects that the students are going to be the ones who can change the world, introducing the "new"

(ibid., p. 196). As Kloeg finely puts it, “We are rather in need of the new as the new: hence, the students as newcomers are the ones called upon” (2022, p. 199). Also, the idea that students are possibly the future world-changers affects the very way in which we should conceive of the teachers’ love towards the “world” (1961, p. 196). If I understand this correctly, according to Arendt, to love the “world” does not simply mean to care deeply about something that has the capacity to change, to become “new” (ibid., p. 196). It also means for a teacher to think of their students as the agents of the “new” (ibid., p. 196), and thus, “prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world” (Arendt, 1961, p. 196). This suggests that, according to Arendt’s educational philosophy, the teacher is not merely someone who helps students to pass from “family life” (ibid., p. 186) to citizen life. We must also consider them professionals who should be aware that they are educating the future world-changers. If we apply this view to what Arendt describes as “the public aspect of the world” (ibid., p. 186), then we could argue that, for Arendt, students must be treated as people who can influence democratic politics in the future. More particularly, the teachers who deeply care about democratic politics (although they know that these politics are not perfect) educate students both to participate and to change the democratic society. In other words, according to my interpretation, when Arendt tells us that adults should “prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world,” (Arendt, 1961, p. 196), she makes a claim that is profoundly political. Given that politics are certainly part of what the Arendtian “world” consists of, then one could very plausibly argue that Arendt’s notion of “renewal” (1961, p. 196) refers to the political too.

However, one must also ask the second question that I set: what kind of “renewal” (ibid., p. 196) is Arendt interested in? Although this is a difficult topic, I think that some

interpretations of Arendt's work can help us clarify it. Azada-Palacios argues

> that Arendt did take the threat of the new very seriously […]. It was, after all, the promise of the new that had swept totalitarian governments into popular power. 'The new' for Arendt was a double-edged sword. While it held the promise of renewal for people in the ruins of tragedies of history, it also held the promise of destruction as it threatened to destroy the stability of history. (2021, p. 573)

According to my view, we must think that Arendt is not an educational philosopher who is happy with any kind of "renewal" (Arendt, 1961, p. 196). For instance, I believe that the Arendtian position would be that democratic politics must not be transformed into a fascist regime or a dictatorship. Rather, I think it is safe to assume that Arendt would prefer a kind of change that improves democratic politics. Now, what does it mean for democratic politics to change for the better? How can we understand improvement when it comes to democracy? While answering this question is not easy, I suggest that there is at least one good way to approach it.

In section i (Chapter 5), I briefly referred to a view expressed by Nicos Poulantzas, a Marxist thinker of the 20th century. As I noted, in his political analysis Poulantzas addresses the "distance between theory and the real" (Poulantzas, 2014, p. 23). The political theorist believes that "the distance between theory and the real always persists despite the effort to fill it" (ibid., p. 23). What is interesting for my own analysis is that, regardless of whether this "distance" (ibid., p. 23) between the two domains is unavoidable or not, one can claim that humans can always take steps towards covering it. Going back to my analysis of Arendt's insights, this suggests that a good way in which democratic politics can be improved is by becoming more consistent with

democratic ideals. Take, for instance, the concept of "equality"— a widely celebrated value that Arendt refers to also in some parts of her work. An interesting way in which democratic politics can be improved is when people find new ways to tackle phenomena of inequality in democratic societies. Studies on egalitarianism such as Samuel Scheffler's give us examples of such inequalities: "The prevailing political morality holds that intentional discrimination based on largely unchosen factors such as race, religion, sex, and ethnicity is unjust, and that distributive inequalities resulting from such discrimination are unjust as well" (Scheffler, 2003, pp. 5-6).

Thus, building on this specific example, the Arendtian teacher could be also understood as someone who accepts responsibility for democratic politics in front of their students, even if they might disagree with the way in which these politics are practiced. For instance, one could imagine that the teacher believes that the society in which they live will become much more democratic if inequalities are significantly reduced or (if possible) eradicated. Hence, following Arendt's insights, the teacher helps their students to pass from "family life" (1996., p. 186) to citizen life, that is, to become citizens of a democratic society. More importantly, however, these teachers educate their students to become world-changers: future citizens capable of improving democratic politics according to their own views and approaches. Ideally, these citizens will find new ways to solve (at least some of) the political issues that their predecessors could not manage to resolve. According to my interpretation, therefore, the teacher is a lover of the Arendtian "world" in the sense that they care about the improvement of what Arendt calls the "public aspect" (Arendt, 1961, p. 186). In my view, the Arendtian teacher is interested in improving the democratic politics for which they hold themselves accountable, while their educational practice aims at this future enhancement. In simpler terms, despite her scepticism about the relationship between

love and politics, Arendt has her own, distinct views about the loving citizen, which influences her conception of the notion of the "teacher." Having therefore presented and interpreted Arendt's philosophy of education, I will now explain why Arendt's views can be used as a methodological tool to improve the Yannarian approach I defended in the first part of the thesis.

iv. Improving the Yannarian Approach Through Arendt's Insights

Although Arendt is a philosopher who would reject Yannaras' political theology (because it describes a type of *agapeic* citizen), her own conception of the world-loving teacher can serve as a very useful tool for evaluating and improving what I described as the Yannarian model of the teacher. This means that the suggestion that Arendt's perspective is useful within the Yannarian context is a personal one that I make here. Arendt herself would probably reject the view of the teacher that I will defend, because it would still be grounded in a citizen theory that she dislikes: After all, as I argued, Yannaras' teacher is also a citizen who is an *agapist*. Therefore, my aim in this specific section is to argue that there are some aspects of Arendt's educational philosophy that can be valuable for what I describe as the Yannarian approach. I do not suggest that Arendt herself would agree with an approach that views her work as a tool to improve a theory that she dislikes.

As I noted in Chapter 4, my interpretation of Yannaras' work suggests that the Yannarian teacher has some specific characteristics. According to the view that I defended, this teacher should care about what I called "captivating courses." This means that teachers must work towards achieving a certain goal: their students being

attracted to what they learn. Also, I argued that one of the direct implications of Yannaras' philosophical and theological work is that teachers should apply *agape* to their relations with their students. According to my reading, the Arendtian view that I described helps us improve the Yannarian approach I defended in the first part, because it brings an important, political element into play: the role of the Yannarian teacher should be also understood as involving a political dimension. To show this, I should remind my reader some key positions that I have advocated so far.

More specifically, I believe that Yannaras would certainly align with Arendt's idea that among the aims of education must be to create citizens. In the interpretation I offered, Yannaras' teachers are citizens of the political community that, according to my argument, one can derive from his works. Hence, the political community in which Yannaras' teachers participate has some very specific features. As I argued, this community tries to imitate Trinitarian life. This means that the members of the community try to co-exist by loving each other. Also, I argued that Yannaras would agree with Miroslav Volf who argued that "since the lives of human beings are inescapably marred by sin and saddled with transitoriness, in history human beings cannot be made into the perfect creaturely images of the Triune God which they are eschatologically destined to become" (Volf, 1998, p. 405). I therefore defended the idea that Yannaras is not an idealist in the sense that he acknowledges that his citizens might not succeed in their attempt to echo the Trinity. Hence, his political philosophy leaves plenty of space for his citizens to try, fail, acknowledge their "αποτυχία [failure]" (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 318), and try again. Politics in this perspective is understood as nothing more than a human "ἄθλημα [endeavour]" (ibid., p. 317). Lastly, I have argued that in Yannaras' Christian anarchism, citizens should be politically free and autonomous. I also noted that Yannaras' form of "direct democracy" entails the

"participation of every adult member of the community in the decision-making process" (ibid., p. 286). According to my interpretation of Yannaras' political philosophy, this participation involves some kind of unanimity, where all citizens agree on the rules and laws that will regulate the life of the community.

In my view, the Arendtian model of the teacher helps us realise that the Yannarian teacher must not be conceived simply as someone who applies *agape* to their relations with their students, or as someone who cares about their students' having captivating learning experiences. Instead, like the Arendtian teacher, the Yannarian teacher must be committed to what I described as one of the central goals of the Yannarian education, that is, the creation of citizens. In other words, Arendt help us improve the Yannarian approach I defended by bringing it closer to what I suggested Yannaras' political and educational commitments are.

Moreover, I believe that Arendt's contribution goes beyond the identification of this specific gap. More particularly, I believe that Arendt's perception of the world-loving teacher can offer another important insight into the discussion of the political dimension that I address here. We have seen that love towards the "world" is closely linked to the notion of "responsibility" (Arendt, 1961, p.196). Specifically, I have noted that from Arendt's perspective, teachers are not simply individuals who teach certain courses; instead, Arendt conceives of them "[…] as representatives of a world for which they must assume responsibility although they themselves did not make it, and even though they may, secretly or openly wish it were other than it is" (ibid., p. 189). According to my reading, since the political is part of what the world consists of in Arendt's educational scheme, the teachers should hold themselves accountable for the democratic politics of their time and place. While they might think that these politics are not perfect and may fight against their imperfections, they should not try to avoid

the Arendtian "responsibility" (ibid., p. 189). Rather, if I understand Arendt properly, part of what it means to "love the world" (ibid., p. 196) is to care about something that is subject to positive change and "renewal" (ibid., p. 196). From this point of view, Arendt's "renewal" (ibid., p. 196) depends on the students, which is something that instructors should keep in mind while teaching them.

My interpretation suggests that some features of the Arendtian teacher are particularly valuable for the Yannarian teacher. To be sure, this does not mean that the two authors share the same political commitments. When it comes to Arendt, I relied on Seth Rosing DeLong's link between Arendt's love towards the world and democratic politics (2004, p. 212), while in Yannaras' case, I argued for an (Orthodox) Christian anarchism. The reason why Arendt's position about the teacher is valuable for the Yannarian context is because it reminds us that the teacher may disagree with what Arendt calls the "world" (Arendt, 1961, p. 189). This suggests that the Yannarian teacher may have objections to the way in which the politics of their day and age are practiced. This idea must be conceived of as a possible implication of Yannaras' political philosophy. As I argued, Yannaras' political philosophy aspires to be an non-idealist political philosophy. Politics in Yannaras' case will never fully achieve its goal, which is to imitate the perfect, loving life of the persons of the Trinity. No-one must expect that the life of the community will be free from any kind of imperfection, be it significant or less serious. This entails that the Yannarian teacher can be conceived as being among these citizens who think that many improvements are necessary.

Building on the Arendtian view, one must think that the role of the Yannarian teacher which is to introduce students to the political life, can be quite challenging, especially because Yannaras' political philosophy rejects idealism. Take, for instance, the case where the political community has failed to actualise *agape* and political freedom so

spectacularly that it seems very unattractive for someone to decide to remain in this community or to become a member of it. Being among the citizens who find the community problematic, the Yannarian teacher must not present a success story to their students. Nor must they pretend that problems do not exist or that they are less serious than they really are. Some interpretations of the Arendtian world-loving teachers such as Viktor Swillens' and Joris Vlieghe's are quite relevant for my discussion because they describe the Arendtian teacher as someone who acknowledges that there are "meaningful things in this world" (2020, p. 1020);

> This becomes clear from her [Arendt's] definition of the educator in terms of an attitude of love for the world. A teacher is not someone who has proven to be a competent instructor or learning-manager. Didactical competences are only secondary: she must care about and stand for (a particular domain of) the world and show to the new generation that it is interesting to be involved with. This is only possible if the teacher shows that she fully affirms that there are meaningful things in this world. (2020, p. 1020)

Building on this interpretation of the Arendtian teacher, one could think that a good alternative for the Yannarian teacher who is aware of the problems of the community is to acknowledge "that there are meaningful things in" (ibid., p. 1020) the community. From this point of view, I suggest that the teacher should be committed to their educational goal, which is to introduce students to the political community, yet without idealising or preaching it to their students. This must be the case especially because the teacher finds some "meaningful things" (ibid., p. 1020) that render participation in this

community a worthwhile project, without overlooking the imperfections. Hence, in my view, the Arendtian model helps us envision the Yannarian teacher as someone who does not feel the need to suppress their real views about the ills of the community in order to serve a "higher political cause" – which is to introduce the students into the community. They let their students know that political life is, as Yannaras would put it, a human "ἄθλημα [endeavour]" (Yannaras, 2006c, p. 317), and that perfection does not exist in this world.

Apart from this, in my view, the Arendtian educational philosophy is valuable because it introduces the notion of "responsibility" (Arendt, 1961, p. 196). This concept is particularly relevant for my interpretation of Yannaras' politics. As I argued, these politics are politics of consent, where the majority rule does not apply. Hence, I suggest that the Yannarian teacher must be ready to accept an Arendtian kind of "responsibility" (ibid., p. 196). As a citizen of Yannaras' Christian anarchist community, the teacher must communicate to their students that they hold themselves accountable for the way in which politics of their time and place are practiced. Like Arendt's, Yannaras' teacher must do this even if they think that these politics are imperfect and regardless of how serious these imperfections are. According to my interpretation of Yannaras' political philosophy, the Yannarian teacher is, above all, a citizen of a political community that is regulated by unanimity. Hence, they cannot deny responsibility. For instance, they cannot argue that they belong to an oppressed minority who wishes to fight against the implications caused by the decisions of the majority. In my view, this is precisely why the Arendtian position is particularly relevant, even though it does not originate from a similar view on politics.

Some may think that, unlike Arendt, Yannaras would probably avoid using the term "love" to describe this type of care about politics which is linked to the notion of

"responsibility." Yet, the Arendtian world-loving citizen discussed above is valuable because it can serve as the ground for us to envision the Yannarian teacher as a profoundly humble person; that is, someone who does not hesitate to acknowledge in front of their students that it is an "us" that did not succeed in developing a community that echoes the Trinity, and not "them." In my interpretation, this attitude must accompany every stage of an educational process that aims at creating the future participants of the Christian anarchist community that I have described.

CHAPTER 8: YANNARAS AND CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Introduction: Why Critical Pedagogy?

I will now turn to evaluate what I described as Yannaras' philosophy of education, by focusing on Yannaras' Trinitarian *agape*. As I argued, Yannaras must be conceived as an author who connects the notion of the Trinity with the politics at which his education should aim. Hence, the Trinity in Yannaras' case has some political and educational significance. I will now turn to evaluate Yannaras' Trinitarian agape by arguing that this notion can contribute to some contemporary philosophical discussions on education. More particularly, I will focus on the critical pedagogy literature by bringing Yannaras' work into dialogue with some of these studies. However, one may ask a very reasonable question here: why do I choose this specific educational trend? There are at least three reasons that justify my choice.

Firstly, critical pedagogues are known for emphasising the political dimensions of education. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration for someone to argue that most critical pedagogy discussions link education with politics. Hence, in my view this

represents an important overlap between these studies and what I described as Yannaras' philosophy of education. Secondly, many critical pedagogy scholars connect the idea of love with the idea of politics. Referring to the work of thinkers that can be very easily understood as critical pedagogy theorists, Michalinos Zembylas writes that they "have attempted to expand theorization on the concept of love in critical education - arguing that love can constitute an important pedagogical intervention in struggles against unjust social and educational structures" (Zembylas, 2017, p. 31). The most vivid expression of the idea that love has a political dimension, however, comes from bell hooks, another critical pedagogy scholar. Arguing that writers like Thomas Merton, Martin Luther King and Erich Fromm associated love with politics, hooks laments that "this important politicization of love is often absent from today's writing" (hooks, 2001, p. 76). In my view, given that I have interpreted Yannaras as a thinker whose education aims at an *agapeic* citizen, it would be a serious omission to exclude critical pedagogy from my discussion here. Arguably, critical pedagogy scholars are the only educational theorists who refer to the link between love and politics to such an extent. The third reason why I discuss this trend is that some critical pedagogues refer specifically to the notion of *agape*. In my view, this represents another important overlap between critical pedagogy and Yannaras.

In my presentation of critical pedagogy literature, I will argue that there is a certain approach to love that many critical pedagogues share. To the best of my knowledge, this has not been adequately addressed in the literature. According to this approach, love is conceived as a motivation. For instance, as I will show, when this approach is applied to politics, then love (*agape* included) is described as a motivation for a certain action that is related to the political. To be sure, this does not mean that this is the only way in which critical pedagogy theorists understand love. Yet, as I will argue, this is

one of the dominant ones. In my view, my interpretation of Yannaras' trinitarian *agape* can bring some important insights to some of these discussions.

i. A Preliminary Comment About Love as Motivation

In his discussion of liberation theology John Milbank laments that "the liberation theologians only acknowledge in Christ a perfection of subjective motivation, a claim that is meaningless [...]" (2006, p. 240). Later in the text, he calls this motivation "motivation of love" (ibid., p. 240). Liberation theology is a theological trend that, according to some scholars, is closely linked to critical pedagogy. As Thomas Oldenski puts it: "One is continually reminded that both critical pedagogy and liberation theology provide a language of possibility and transformation, and both have implications for what transpires in schools and what purpose schools serve" (2002, p. 133). Here, I am not interested in offering a thorough clarification of Milbank's criticism against liberation theology. What is important for my analysis, however, is that his critical comment contains the term which is profoundly relevant for critical pedagogy too: "motivation." According to the view that I will defend, many critical pedagogy theorists understand love as a motivation for a certain action. To be sure, this idea has not escaped the attention of some commentators of critical pedagogy. For instance, in his description of Antonia Darder's reading of Paulo Freire's ideas, Terrel Billy Sales notes that "the individual and collective humanization of the oppressed and marginalized cannot be actualized without love; for it is love that becomes the motivating factor for all acts of true liberation" (Sales, 2020, p. 235). In my presentation, however, I will argue that the perception of love as motivation is present in many other critical pedagogy studies as well. As I noted, critical pedagogues usually emphasise the political character of

education, while sometimes they link love to the political. As I will argue, therefore, sometimes this approach to love (*agape* included) as motivation is directly related to politics. Then, I will confine my discussion to the notion of *agape*, illustrating what I think Yannaras' position contributes to the critical pedagogy discussion.

So far in this thesis, I have associated *agape* with the concept of motivation in my interpretation of Yannaras' approach on self-sacrificial *agape*. I have argued that we must read Yannaras as a philosopher who believes that self-sacrificial, *agapeic* acts must originate from motivations which are not egocentric (Chapter 3). In my discussion of critical pedagogy, the connection between motivation and love will be slightly different. In other words, I will show that, according to my reading, love *itself* is understood as a motivation. In this context, humans (e.g. teachers, students, critical pedagogy practitioners) are usually called to act *out of* love.

To be sure, when it comes to education, the idea of love as motivation is not unique to critical pedagogy discussions. One must certainly agree with David Aldridge who argues that "indeed, some educational invocations of 'eros' seem to have used the term more or less as a synonym for motivation" (Aldridge, 2019, p. 534). In my view this conceptualisation of eros as motivation is implied in studies such as R.K. Elliot's, who gives an example about a student who "develops a passion for" a certain "subject" (Elliot, 1974, p. 135). As I discussed in Chapter 4, Elliot's student loves this "subject" (ibid., p. 135) in a way in which, according to the author, resembles erotic love (p. 136).

Yet, interesting for my own analysis is that Elliot's example can be very easily conceived as an example that refers to a "motivation." Specifically, as he delves into his subject, Elliot's student realises that "he has to develop skills and abilities which he did not originally associate with his subject. He also has to do a good deal of work which seems uncommonly like drudgery" (ibid., p. 136). In my view, this suggests that

among the things that the subject requires, there are at least some that the student would certainly avoid doing if he did not love his subject that much. Eventually "the student accepts these conditions, acquires the necessary skills, satisfies the standards, and performs the drudgery with a good heart, without resentment" (ibid., p. 136). In my view, a very plausible interpretation of this example starts from the notion of "motivation." In this case, love *motivates* someone to engage in a complicated and challenging process. For instance, one could imagine that Elliot's student loves physics, while they are not very good at mathematics. Yet, at some point they realise that making progress in physics, which they love, requires them to improve in mathematics. Thus, their love of physics motivates them to work hard to reach this goal.

Love in the form of motivation is also found in political discussions in education. Some critical pedagogy studies can serve as a good example to illustrate this. As I will argue, the underlying assumption of many of these studies is that it is out of love that certain people who are involved in education (teachers, students, activists) act, must act, or refrain from acting in certain ways. The motivational approach to love is not always directly linked to the political in critical pedagogy discussions. However, I think that it would not be an exaggeration for someone to claim that at least some critical pedagogues have been influenced by two authors who connect love with politics. More particularly, these two authors portray love as a motivation for certain political practices.

Firstly, we have Martin Luther King Jr. King thought that the best activist stance would be a "mass non-violent resistance based on the principle of love" (King, 2000, p. 323). He rejected the idea that the Black Americans of his time should either "give in" (ibid., p. 323) or "rise up against their oppressors with physical violence and corroding hatred" (ibid., p. 323). Instead, he thought that they should "organize mass

nonviolent resistance based on the principle of love" (ibid., p. 323). In my reading, it is evident from his text that, from King's perspective, this specific activist stance must have "love" (ibid., p. 323) as its very motivation. We must not think that King merely calls for this "non-violent" (ibid., p. 323) stance without any presuppositions whatsoever. King's pacifism was not ambiguous, and it is very easy for someone to imagine an alternative motivation here. Indeed, such a peaceful way of protesting could have been motivated by entirely different factors – one could avoid using violence against the powerful "oppressors" (ibid., p. 323) because they are afraid of the consequences. In simpler terms, fear for one's safety can certainly serve as a motivation for this peaceful way of protesting.

Yet, according to my interpretation, in this speech King does not call for this specific motivation. In fact, he seems far from entertaining the idea that, in this particular context, things such as safety should come first. For one may think that it would be much safer for the "oppressed" (ibid., p. 323) to do what King rejects, that is, to refrain from any reaction: "Another way is to acquiesce and to give in, to resign yourself to the oppression. Some people do that […]" (ibid., p. 323). Not to mention that, elsewhere, King implies that "true pacifism" is a fearless choice, by describing it as the "courageous confrontation of evil by the power of love [...]" (King, 2010, p. 86). Instead, what I think King does is to encourage his compatriots to avoid violence *out of love.* He did not call for a specific activist stance only, but for a specific motivation too. From this point of view, people must act peacefully because they love others, and not for other reasons (e.g. because they fear them).

Apart from King, it is certainly Ernesto Guevara de la Serna's ("Che") account of love which has served as an influence for some critical pedagogues. Like King, Guevara can be understood as referring to motivational love: "Let me say, with the risk of

appearing ridiculous, that the true revolutionary is guided by strong feelings of love. It is impossible to think of an authentic revolutionary without this quality" (Guevara, 1968, p. 398). Unlike King's, Guevara's normative claim does not originate from a pacifist position. However, it is similar to King's, in the sense that it portrays love as a motivation for a certain political action. As he puts it: "the revolutionary leaders […] must struggle every day so that their love of living humanity is transformed into concrete deeds, into acts that will serve as an example, as a mobilizing factor" (ibid., p. 398).

Hence, as I will show, the position of King and Guevara that I described here are quite similar to those found in some critical pedagogy studies, as they share the same pattern. However, before proceeding with the analysis of this view, it is important to offer a brief description of what critical pedagogy is, and more importantly, how I am going to treat it in the remaining sections of this thesis. Hence, I will present some features of this specific educational trend, and then I will delve into the notion of love (*agape* included).

ii. Critical Pedagogy: A Very Brief Overview

What is critical pedagogy? There is no doubt that this is a very challenging question. One must agree with Tony Monchinski who writes that "there is no trite, one or two sentence definition of critical pedagogy that explains exactly what critical pedagogy is at all times for all people" (Monchinski, 2008, p. 2). Historically, the very "term" is attributed to Henry Giroux (see, Ryoo et. al. 2009, p. 134) who is, arguably, one of the founders of critical pedagogy. However, Giroux himself tells us that the notion "really

began in discussions with Paulo because we had rejected the notion of radical pedagogy" (Giroux in Steinberg, 2020, p. 205).

Paulo is, of course, Paulo Freire, one of the most influential figures in critical pedagogy. His writings had a profound impact on the work of many representatives of critical pedagogy who not only value his legacy but also significantly expand it. Indicatively, the list of critical pedagogues which Sheila Macrine calls "first generation Freirean scholars" (Macrine, 2020, p. 8), apart from Giroux, include Antonia Darder, Donald Macedo, Peter McLaren, Joe Kincheloe, bell hooks, and others (ibid., p. 8). One could certainly argue that understanding critical pedagogy requires visiting Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, often described as "one of the classic texts of critical pedagogy" (Giroux, 2010, p. 715). Yet even after such a step, the very definition of this educational trend remains a very difficult task. As Joe Kincheloe notes,

> No matter how long I teach and write about critical pedagogy, I always find it difficult to define the term in a brief and compelling manner. The reason for this difficulty involves the fact that critical pedagogy is a complex notion that asks much of the educators and students who embrace it. Teaching a critical pedagogy involves more than learning a few pedagogical techniques and the knowledge required by the curriculum, the standards, or the textbook. (2008, p. 8)

For White and colleagues (2014) "critical pedagogy" is "both a philosophy of education and a social movement combining education with critical theory" (2014, p. 126). The fact that at least some critical pedagogues are influenced by critical theory (the Frankfurt School and its legacy in political philosophy), is indicative of a broader truth: critical pedagogues suggest that there is strong link between education and politics. For instance, especially after Freire's influential insights, one encounters

assumptions such as the view that that there is no such a thing as a politically "neutral" type of "curriculum" (Shor, 1992, p. 12). In my view, this is finely summarised by Giroux who points out that "pedagogy is a moral and political practice that is always implicated in power relations because it offers particular versions and visions of civic life, community, the future […]" (Giroux, 2013, p. 29). Hence, critical pedagogy asks things such as "what the relationship is between learning and social change, what knowledge is of most worth, what it means to know something, and in what direction should one desire" (ibid., p. 29). Pierre Orelus proceeds a step further arguing that "critical pedagogy addresses social inequality and all forms of oppression of which people have been victims" (2011, p. 10). Despite the lack of an overarching definition, some fairly recent works offer insights that help advance our understanding of this complicated educational trend. For instance, Tony Monchinski invites us to conceive of it as both "descriptive" and "prescriptive" (Monchinski, 2008, p. 2);

> Critical pedagogy is descriptive in that it critically analyses the world we live in. A teacher–student–scholar informed by critical pedagogy does not take the status quo as inevitable or unalterable. Critical pedagogy looks at how the pedagogical, political, social, and economic aspects of life play out and inform one another. Critical pedagogy asks why do these things exist the way they do? Who benefits from this way of things? Why? Who suffers? How? (Monchinski, 2008, p. 2).

However, Monchiski continues, this specific educational trend "is also normative" because its aim is not simply for humans to reflect on the "world" in a critical mode (ibid., p. 2). It also invites them to take action in order to improve the "world,"

proposing ways to transform it (ibid., p. 2). Monchiski's analysis is very helpful since it offers us another valuable distinction. The author argues that, apart from being a "discipline" that one may explore and conduct research on (ibid., p. 1), critical pedagogy also involves a much more applied aspect, summarised by the term "praxis" (ibid., p. 1). "Praxis" is another crucial concept that is found in the work of many critical pedagogues (e.g. Giroux, 1981, p.117; hooks, 1994, p. 14; McLaren, 1992, p. 17; the list goes on…). This notion is usually understood as a link between what Sara C. Motta calls "application" and "theorizing" (2011, p. 194). According to Motta's explanation of Freire's view: "Praxis involves the steps of application, evaluation, reflection; and then return to theorizing" (ibid., p. 194).

When it comes to its "discipline" (Monchinski, 2008, p. 1) aspect, Seehwa Cho suggests that we should conceive of the critical pedagogy literature in "categories": "The literature in critical pedagogy," she writes, "can be classified into three categories: the theoretical, the pedagogical, and the political" (Cho, 2013, p. 5). The "*theoretical*" approaches, Cho tells us, "focus on critical theories, which constitute the foundation of critical pedagogy" (ibid., p. 5). The "*pedagogical*" ones explore "the micro-level of pedagogy. This literature attempt to suggest how to use critical pedagogy in classrooms" (ibid., p. 5). The "*political*" approaches constitute a body of work that serves as a "critical analysis on issues and problems that influence the policies and practices of education" (ibid., p. 6).

Hence, building on these comments, we must assume that critical pedagogy is a philosophical reflection on education, but also that it involves practices and activities that take place within school classrooms and other educational institutions. More specifically, as Kincheloe's analysis implies, critical pedagogy usually seeks to detect and critically reflect upon various forms of oppression, since according to the author,

critical pedagogues explore themes such as "[…] the complex processes of racism, gender bias, class bias, cultural bias, heterosexism, religious intolerance, etc." (2008, p. 9).

One of the general aims of critical pedagogy is finely described by Victoria Perselli and Diana Moehrke-Rasul (2017), who assert that this educational trend seeks "to raise awareness of and critique oppressive forces" (2017, p. 132). This is precisely why some specific concepts appear in various critical pedagogy studies. For instance, Freire's insights about the relation between students and teachers are widely accepted. One example is the rejection of the so called '"banking" concept' of education, in the context of which, "education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat" (Freire, 2005, p. 72). Rejecting the "banking" version, both Freire and numerous other critical pedagogues support a "dialogical" type of education (what Freire calls "the dialogical character of education," ibid. p. 93).

Although the critical pedagogy discussion about the notion of "dialogue" is quite long involving various opinions and criticisms (see for instance the interesting feminist critiques cited in Kaufmann, 2010, p. 460); many critical pedagogues are sympathetic towards Freire's idea that dialogue must be viewed as part of conscientisation, which is a broad procedure aiming to cultivate what Freire calls "critical consciousness" (e.g. Freire, 2005, p. 39—see also the discussion on p. 40). In Michael Peter and Colin Lankshear's terms: "Progress from naive to critical consciousness involves conscientization" (Peters and Lankshear, 1994, p. 181). According to Darder and colleagues "conscientisation is defined as the process by which students, as empowered subjects, achieve a deepening awareness of the social realities which shape their lives

and discover their own capacities to recreate them" (2009. p. 14). Peter and Lankshear argue that the "critically conscious" person possesses "a certain quality of awareness: awareness of our temporality, our 'situatedness' in history, and of our reality as being capable of transformation through action in collaboration with others [...]; this is precisely to be critically conscious" (Peter and Lankshear, 1994, p. 181).

In other words, from this point of view, dialogue is not only about communicating or sharing views. As Sara C. Motta argues, explaining Freire's point of view: "Dialogue isn't just about deepening understanding, but is part of making a difference in the world" (2011, p. 194). Therefore, the idea of dialogue must not be understood as being irrelevant to the strongly activist stance that critical pedagogy texts call for – eloquently expressed by Ryoo and colleagues: "critical pedagogues are united by their commitment to social transformation for the collective good" (2009, p. 134).

Given that this activist dimension is an indispensable part of critical pedagogy, it is important to note that, in my own study, I will mostly deal with this educational trend as a theory, or as "a philosophy of education" (White et. al, 2014, p. 126). Thus, since my purpose is to show why Yannaras' conception of the Trinitarian *agape* can offer important insights into some critical pedagogy discussions, it must be clear that it is the conceptual aspect of critical pedagogy that I will delve into. More specifically, I will discuss the ways in which some critical pedagogues conceive of the idea of love. Then I will focus a bit more on the notion of *agape*. In the previous section, I argued that Martin Luther King and Che Guevara are two examples where love is treated as a motivation for certain political practices. As I will show in the next section, this pattern is to be found in many critical pedagogy descriptions of love, although the link to the political is not always present. According to my argument, this pattern applies to *agape*

as well, which is where Yannaras' work comes into play. In my view, Yannaras has some important ideas to offer the scholars who understand *agape* as a motivation.

iii. Love and *Agape* in Critical Pedagogy: Paulo Freire as a "Motivational" *Agapist*

There is no overarching theory of love in critical pedagogy. As Emily A. Daniels rightly puts it in her analysis: "'Love'" is a common word, but its definitions, experiences and representations differ greatly. This terminology and its classroom application vary greatly depending on the researcher, teacher and students - as well as culturally specific connotations" (2012, p. 7). However, as I noted in the previous two sections, in this critical presentation, I will argue that there is at least one dominant way to conceive of love in critical pedagogy. In other words, I will argue that many critical pedagogues understand love as a motivation for a certain action or stance. Also, I will show that sometimes this specific action or stance is closely connected with the political. In this sense, love is understood as a political concept.

It would certainly be an omission for someone to address the concept of love in critical pedagogy without mentioning Paulo Freire's ideas. Freire referred to love throughout his works and this has not escaped the attention of the secondary literature (e.g. Liambas and Kaskaris, 2012; etc.). For instance, in his detailed study on the topic, Edward Michael Shoder argues that "love was both the means to and the end of his educational philosophy and project" (Shoder, 2010, p. 11). Shoder makes this claim based on a passage of Freire that summarises his "utopian vision and his goal" (ibid., p. 11). Shoder goes on to quote Freire's formulation: "From these pages I hope at least the following will endure: my trust in the people, and my faith in men and in the creation of a world in which it will be easier to love" (Freire 1970 as cited in Shoder, 2010, p. 11).

However, according to my reading, throughout Freire's work, love is also presented as something that is supposed to motivate people towards certain goals that are deeply linked to the political. This may not come as a surprise to the scholar who is interested in Freire's own influences. In section i I presented Che Guevara as a theorist who thought that "[…] the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love […]" (Guevara, 1968, p. 398). In a footnote found in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire quotes Guevara's formulation, asking: "What, indeed, is the deeper motive which moves individuals to become revolutionaries, but the dehumanization of people?" (Freire, 2005, p. 89). To be sure, such a phrase needs to be understood in the wider context of this specific work, that, according to Zachary A. Casey,

> "can be read as a pedagogical extension of Marx, as a way of "reinventing" critical components of Marx's thinking, especially dialectical materialism and the dialectical conditions of oppression (oppressors who actively oppress those who are then constructed as the oppressed, defined in relation to those who oppress them). (Casey, 2019, p. 189)

Juha Suoranta presents Freire's Marxism as a fairly classical one, in the sense that it involves the reading of society and politics through the lens of dialectics: "Taking advice from Hegel and Marx, Freire perceived social reality as two opposing camps, the oppressors and the oppressed" (2022, p. 273). As the author informs us, Freire's political and educational commitments were deeply influenced by his own experiences: "Working as a literacy teacher in the impoverished city areas and countryside, he faced the poverty and misery of his youth. Seeing poverty and hunger, Freire's understanding of peasants' and workers' subordination in the Brazilian society widened" (ibid., p. 270). In this sense, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* contains a theory of "revolutionary pedagogy," in the context of which the teachers seek "to arouse the oppressed's critical

consciousness in dialogical literacy campaigns and cultural activities. The second stage is the cultural revolution, which takes place after abolishing the oppressive capitalist society" (ibid., p. 276). This is, in brief, the intellectual context in which Freire quotes Guevara's passage about love.

According to my interpretation, what Freire means is that love must be the "deeper motive" for the "revolutionaries" to engage in the struggle against the "dehumanization" of the oppressed (Freire, 2005, p. 89). In my view, this is also how one must interpret the preceding sentences found in this specific footnote, such as the one that reads; "I am more and more convinced that true revolutionaries must perceive the revolution, because of its creative and liberating nature, as an act of love" (ibid., p. 89). Similarly, in the main text Freire writes that: "Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause—the cause of liberation" (ibid., p. 89). In simpler terms, according to my interpretation of the philosopher, love is a virtue that entails a very practical, political stance: the lover must side with the oppressed groups whose rights are violated by the oppressors. Hence, like in Guevara's text, love is portrayed as the *motivation* for adopting a certain political view and act towards realising it. In another work called *Pedagogy of Indignation*, Freire uses the very term "motivation," leaving no doubt that my interpretation of his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* succeeds in capturing the essence of the message that he wants to convey:

> I have the right to be angry and to express that anger, to hold it as my motivation to fight, just as I have the right to love and to express my love for the world, to hold it as my motivation to fight, because while a historical

> being, I live history as a time of possibility, not of predetermination. (Freire, 2016, pp. 58-59)

One could argue that this motivational element of love can be also traced in some interpretations of Freire's concept of "armed love"—which Antonia Darder portrays as "a love that could be lively, forceful, and inspiring, while at the same time, critical, challenging and insistent" (2011, p. 179). For instance, one could suggest that Daniels' conception can be interpreted in this particular way, since, according to the author, this type of love involves "a strong and deep commitment to protecting, caring for, and empowering students in the face of social barriers and oppressions that surface in their everyday lives" (2012, p. 10). Therefore, according to Daniels, "armed love includes a strongly critical, political and activist stance that involves a deep social awareness of injustice, and the core commitment to changing the lives of historically marginalized students through transformative education" (ibid., p. 10). In other words, we must assume that Daniels' position implies that teachers must love students, and *because* of this love, teachers should help them tackle the "social barriers and oppressions" (ibid., p. 10) they encounter in their lives. Let's think of an example that illustrates this: say that someone's students have been the victims of racist practices because of their cultural background. In my view, Daniels' teacher who acts out of "armed love" must seek to help their students realise that they have been the victims of racism, encouraging dialogue within the class about what racism is, how it operates, discussing possible ways of tackling racism at a personal, social, or political level. Yet, in my view, by using the Freirean "armed love," one must deduce that Daniels wants these things to be done *out of* love; the teacher must love their students and proceed with these specific teaching practices *because* of this love. This way of reading Daniels is profoundly Freirean, in the sense that it is based on Freire's view that "dialogue" requires "love":

“The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself” (Freire, 2005, p. 89).

Understanding my claim about the idea of the “loving motivation” that one finds in Freire’s work, requires a more thorough explanation of what Freire means when he uses the term “love.” In my view, this is a challenging concept, and one cannot simply rely on some general descriptions often found in the literature to make sense of it. For example, Peter McLaren writes that “for Freire, love is preeminently and irrevocably dialogical,” describing it as “the fire that ignites not only the revolutionary but also the creative action of the artist […]” (McLaren, 2016, p. 239). Similarly, from Darder’s perspective, Freire’s love has a clear political dimension, being incompatible with the “[…] liberal, romanticized, or merely feel-good notion of love that so often is mistakenly attributed to this term […]” (Darder, 2011, p. 179). James W. Fraser argues that “love”, from Freire’s perspective, “is an active commitment and not a passive and often selfish emotion” (Fraser, 1997, p. 176). Even though these comments provide good descriptions of Freire’s love, they do not offer us much detail. In contrast, Shoder’s thesis on the topic is probably the closest one can find in a study that aims to define Freirean love. Shoder uses contemporary philosophy of love (mainly the works of Irvin Singer and Mike Martin) to suggest that Freirean love can be understood as “a conscious moral appraisal and bestowal of value on a person or thing” (Shoder, 2010, p. 3; see also in p. 57). Although I agree with Shoder’s definition, my description is going to be a bit more explicit with respect to another dimension of Freirean love.

Defining love in Freire’s work is not merely a matter of consistency for my own study. Since my thesis focuses a lot on the concept of “agape,” an interesting question is whether Freire’s understanding of love is influenced by his relation to Christianity.

Generally, Freire was influenced by the Christian approach, not only in the level of practice—in his description of himself he uses the term "man of faith" (Horton and Freire, 1990, p. 246) – but also at a conceptual level. As the secondary literature reminds us, throughout Freire's work one could clearly hear the echoes of Christian Personalists such as Emmanuel Mounier (Rocha, 2018 p. 376) and Jacques Maritain (Valenzano, 2021, p. 75). In other words, given that I have argued for a motivational approach to political love, my question can be reformulated as follows: When Freire calls for a loving motivation in politics and education, is he referring to *agape*? Does Freire invite revolutionaries, teachers, and potential practitioners of his pedagogy to side with the oppressed groups of society out of *agape*?

Although this is not an easy question, I believe one has good grounds to argue that the reply must be positive. In my view, a common assumption behind some descriptions of Freire's love is that *agape* is a concept that is not always understood as something that entails a very specific socio-political stance, such as siding with the oppressed. In other words, Christian theology does not consider the commitment to a certain political cause an essential element of *agape*. This is why some commentators like Liambas and Kaskaris rush to argue that Freire's conception is different, writing that "even if his work has been influenced in diverse ways by the Christian teaching, the issue of love is not limited within the norms of theology since for Freire even Christians ought to reject and discard exploitation" (2012, p. 192). Similarly, Darder maintains that Freire's love is not linked with "[…] the long-suffering and self-effacing variety associated with traditional religious formation" (2011, p. 179). In my view, the best way to conceive of Freire's position is to assume that the commitment to liberatory politics represents one way in which *agape* is fulfilled. In other words, the *agapist* practices *agape* more

effectively by assuming this specific political stance. If I understand this correctly, this is implied in Dèbora B. A. Junker's description of Freire's conception of "faith":

> Hence, a faith that anchors itself in passivity and accommodation is an alienating faith and serves to promote injustices and inequities. In essence, it is a faith that contradicts the Christian message to love God and neighbors. Love in this respect is not an abstraction, but it materializes in concrete actions of solidarity and justice in face of oppressive socioeconomic and cultural situations. (Junker, 2015, p. 151)

Therefore, in my view, not only does Freire believe that love can serve as a motivation, but his love is not an open, undefined concept: Freire's love is *agape*. This reading of Freire aligns with the philosopher's broader stance towards the Christian Church. As I noted, Liambas and Kaskaris argue that "[…] for Freire even Christians ought to reject and discard exploitation" (2012, p. 192). This view is certainly evident in Freire's *Education, Liberation and the Church*, where the Marxist pedagogue rejects some particular versions of the Christian Church. For instance, according to the author, the Church should avoid subscribing to a "traditionalist line" (Freire, 1984, p. 535) by placing "masochistic emphasis on sin, hell-fire and eternal damnation" (ibid., p. 535). This type of Church, writes Freire, calls humans to interpret their every-day problems as being part of their broader goal as Christians, which is to "pay for their sins. The more they suffer, the more they purify themselves, finally reaching heaven and eternal rest" (ibid., p. 535). From Freire's perspective, a Church who calls Christians to adopt such a view about life is, in fact, endorsing passivity, failing to offer a solution to "the real problems of the oppressed" (ibid., p. 536). Therefore, we must think of Freire as a Christian Marxist who feels comfortable connecting Christianity to the socio-political goals he had in mind. We must read him as an intellectual who aligns with what he calls

"the prophetic church" – a Church that refuses to "separate worldliness from transcendence or salvation from liberation" (ibid., p. 542). From this point of view, it does not come as a surprise that his theory of love is, in essence, a theory of *agape* that is supposed to serve as a motivation for humans to tackle social inequalities, while helping the oppressed realise and critically reflect on what perpetuates their social status.

iv. Love and *Agape* in Critical Pedagogy: After Freire

Despite its weaknesses and the criticisms that it has received over the years, Freire's work had a profound impact on many critical pedagogues. In my view, this also applies to the vast majority of thinkers who discuss love in their works. For instance, a number of scholars have expanded on "radical love," a term discussed by Freire and others. Tyron M.O. Douglas and Christine W. Nganga write: "as teachers of future educators and proponents of radical love, we recognize that we must equip our students with tools that they can use to liberate themselves from forms of ignorance and oppressive practices […]" (2015, p. 67-68). In my view, it is evident that the authors embrace a profoundly Freirean point of view, since they describe "radical love" as promoting "the voices and perspectives of marginalized voices and non-dominant positionalities/perspectives […]" (ibid., p. 68). To be sure, their approach becomes even more Freirean when they connect "radical love" with the notion of "dialogue" (ibid., pp. 67-68). This type of love, the authors maintain, "allow us to recast power differences in our classrooms, even as it provides tools for dialogue, action and hope" (p. 68).

In my interpretation, the authors imply that love is a virtue that should motivate humans (e.g. teachers) to assume a specific anti-oppressive pedagogical stance which

is deeply connected to politics. According to my reading, the motivational approach becomes even more apparent in other conceptions of the notion of "radical love." For instance, influenced by bell hook's insights, Kennedy and Grinter "define the term 'radical love' as the empathetic, active, and passionate impulse to transform social relationships in ways that seek justice and freedom" (2015, p. 44). In my view, the reason why this definition is closely linked to the notion of "motivation," is because it contains the term "impulse" (ibid., p. 44). In other words, I believe that when the authors use this term, they mean "motivation." Based on this view, I consider the authors' definition profoundly Freirean, especially because of this term. In other words, although the motivational approach does not represent the only perspective in critical pedagogy studies on love, its roots are deeply embedded in many such studies. As it is the case with Guevara or Freire's, some conceptualisations of motivational love are linked to politics in an explicit way.

Take, for instance, Peter McLaren, one of the most prolific critical pedagogues profoundly influenced by Freire. McLaren is a Christian socialist. This means that he agrees with particular readings of the Bible, such as Jose Porfirio Miranda's (1974, 2004; as cited in McLaren, 2015, p. 23). From this point of view, the Bible calls for a type of communism (ibid., p. 23), which, for McLaren, is radically different from the communism of "[…] the totalitarian police states that claimed to be communist (such as the Soviet Union) […]" (McLaren, 2015, p. 22).

Like Freire, McLaren often links the idea of "love" with the political. For instance, he describes the concept by using adjectives such as "red" (e.g. McLaren and Monzó, 2014, n.p.), or "revolutionary" (McLaren, 2010, p. 10), - a type of love that "[…] can only exist between free and equal people who have the same ideals and commitment to serving the poor and the oppressed" (ibid., p. 10). In other contexts, McLaren refers

explicitly to *agape* (see for instance Ryoo et al. 2009, p. 140). In a 2019 text, the philosopher writes in a rather polemical tone:

> Many of us grew up believing truth will prevail and corrupt politicians on the take will receive their due punishment. We obviously watched too many westerns where the cowboys in the white hats always prevailed. We Marxists cannot rely on the law to support us. We must look for our wellspring for revolution from our struggles from below, enlivened by Agape, or selfless love for humanity. (McLaren, 2019, p. 319)

One must not fail to notice the striking similarity between McLaren's and Freire's conception of *agape*. In McLaren's perspective on how Marxists could fight against the ills of capitalism, *agape* seems to play a very special role, which is that of motivation. In other words, in the context of his Christian-socialist agenda, McLaren embraces the idea that *agape* must motivate revolutionaries to carry out a "revolution" (ibid., p. 319)—similar to Freire's work, the echoes of Guevara are apparent in this context too.

A similar pattern is found in other critical pedagogy theorists deeply influenced by Freire, such as bell hooks. For instance, many scholars cite hooks' well-known description of love as "profoundly political" (see for instance hooks, 2001 as cited in Manuel, 2009, p. 100; also, in Nienhuis, 2009, p. 205). Although not all of her references on love involve a connection with the political, in my view, hooks must certainly be categorised among the critical pedagogues who align with what I called the "motivational" approach to political love. For instance, this becomes evident when she contrasts love to selfish motivations that, according to her view, drive activists to partiality. Specifically, hooks refers to:

> black male leaders who can speak and act passionately in resistance to racial domination and accept and embrace sexist domination of women, by feminist white women who work daily to eradicate sexism but who have major blind spots when it comes to acknowledging and resisting racism and white supremacist domination of the planet. (hooks, 2008, p. 290)

This type of partiality must be fought by what hooks calls an "ethic of love," which is entirely incompatible with any type of selfish motivation. In her own words:

> Critically examining these blind spots, I conclude that many of us are motivated to move against domination solely when we feel our self-interest directly threatened. Often, then, the longing is not for a collective transformation of society, an end to politics of dominations, but rather simply for an end to what we feel is hurting us. This is why we desperately need an ethic of love to intervene in our self-centered longing for change. (ibid., p. 290)

To be sure, this reference to an "ethic of love" that, as Kathy Glass puts it, "disrupts the borders of rugged individualism" (2009, p. 169), represents merely *one* among the many ways in which hooks connects love with the political. Also, the fact that, "in hooks' work, love is […] intimately related to politics" as Marilyn Edelstein notes (2009, p. 191), needs to be understood as an influence from the work of other authors, including Martin Luther King Jr, Erich Fromm and Thomas Merton (hooks, 2001, p. 76). Inspired by these authors, hooks complains that "this important politicization of

love is often absent from today's writing" (hooks, 2001, p. 76). According to hooks, these authors highlight the political dimension, since "in their work, loving practice is not aimed at simply giving an individual greater life satisfaction; it is extolled as the primary way we end domination and oppression" (ibid. p. 76). However, the loud presence of love as motivation in hook's work offers us further evidence that supports my argument, according to which, this way of conceiving love is very popular for critical pedagogues, and certainly links hooks' ideas with Freire's, McLaren's, but also with others.

One could very plausibly argue that, given the profound effect that the insights of Freire, McLaren and hooks had on the work of critical pedagogues, this motivational approach is found in other critical pedagogy works too. One of the most explicit references can be found in one of Antonia Darder's public articles, where she argues that: "Love as a political principle motivates the struggle to create mutually life enhancing opportunities for all people. It is a love that is grounded in the mutuality and interdependence of our human existence" (Darder, n.d. p. 19). Similarly, Rebecca Powell openly calls love a "motivating force": "Love must be the motivating force behind empowerment, not personal advancement or social adjustment; for it is love, and not a quest for power, that helps us define our vision and that compels us to work for the common good" (Powell, 1999, p. 122). According to Powell, critical pedagogues themselves must be "motivated by love." She refers to a type of love that "challenges us to go beyond self-servitude and create a community that is characterised by sacrificial action and ethical practice. Unless it is motivated by love, a critical pedagogy has the potential to further divide us" (Powell, 1999, p. 122). One could argue that this motivational view can also be found in other passages such as: "any successful

transformation towards a loving society is not one held up by anger but by love" (Lanas and Zembylas, 2015, p. 40).

The motivation-view is also present in explicitly theological writings such as Kennedy and Grinter's. The authors write that: "dialogue in the classroom assists with the inclusion of cultural voices usually marginalized in society such as women of color, lesbian/gay people, persons with disabilities, and individuals from low-income home backgrounds" (2015, p. 55). Like other critical pedagogues, Kennedy and Grinter conceive of dialogue as a tool that offers us the potential to "become more aware of our social and cultural conditioning as well as our participation, or not, in the making and remaking of history" (2015, pp. 55-56). Yet, crucial to my discussion is that according to the authors, this "dialogue" needs to be understood as part of an *agapeic* pedagogy, which is influenced by parables such as the Good Samaritan's. In their presentation of this parable, the authors describe *agape* as a motivation: "Loving the 'other' is the ethic that Jesus teaches. Such love motivates the Samaritan to overcome religious and cultural barriers to help the traveler" (ibid., p. 47). And since the authors believe that this kind of love is valuable for classroom teachers, they explicitly call for an *agapeic* motivation in education:

> Therefore, it appears especially important for educators who identify themselves as being religious persons to scrutinize their professed actions of love with their students. Are our actions of love embedded within concealed motives to manipulate and/or control classroom instruction? Or, do we engage the actions of our love in dialogue with our culturally diverse students? (ibid., 2015, p. 54)

Departing from a similar, theological starting point, Terrelle Billy Sales discusses Darder's reading of Freire's views, writing that "the individual and collective humanization of the oppressed and marginalized cannot be actualized without love; for it is love that becomes the motivating factor for all acts of true liberation" (Sales, 2020, p. 235). Equally, according to his interpretation of Christian theology, in the case of "Jesus' sacrificial death" there is no doubt that "the motivating factor for His sacrifice was agape: love for God and love for His fellow brethren" (ibid., p. 239). Elsewhere, apart from offering more details on the notion of *agape* as "motivation" in Jesus' case (Sales, 2021, pp. 110-111), the author calls for a loving motivation in critical pedagogy: "When critical educators operate in truth, motivated by love, and challenge those who misconstrue the true intentions and purpose of education, we are able to present an accurate portrayal of education in its fullest measure" (ibid., p. 108).

Before I turn to situate Yannaras' work within these discussions, I think that it is important to mention that when critical pedagogues talk about love as a motivation, they do not necessarily refer to the very same things. For example, not all critical pedagogues refer to the notion of *agape* per se. Also, from the studies I discussed, Freire and McLaren view love as a motivation for an explicitly political, revolutionary struggle, while hooks calls people to stand and confront even those types of social injustice that do not affect them directly. The discussion of the differences among the authors that I discussed is a slightly different topic. Important for my own study is for me to highlight this "motivational" approach, that all these studies share. According to the argument I defended here, love is mostly viewed as a virtue that serves as a motivation, in the sense that it moves humans to adopt certain political and educational practices. In the next section, I will mostly focus on the idea of *agape*, showing what Yannaras' position has to offer to critical pedagogy studies.

v. Yannaras' Trinitarian Agape and Critical Pedagogy

So far in this thesis I have described Yannaras' philosophy of education as a Trinitarian one. Specifically, I argued that this type of education aims to produce citizens who strive to imitate the Trinity. This means that these citizens try to apply *agape* to their relations with one another. Hence, throughout Yannaras' work, one finds a political type of *agape*. Yet, this type of *agape* is the result of an imitation of another *agape*, the Trinitarian one. This means that the political and the educational aim at the metaphysical. I also argued that Trinitarian *agape* is relevant for Yannaras' politics because it is linked to the notion of metaphysical freedom. In Yannaras' Trinitarian theology, *agape* is also a concept that refers to Trinitarian ontology. I showed that, like many other theologians, Yannaras opts for a literal interpretation of a passage from John's First Epistle, according to which: "God is love" (1 John: 4:16). As I pointed, from Yannaras' point of view, this *agapeic* mode of existence is an absolutely free mode of existence. Also, I suggested that the metaphysical freedom of the Trinity should be somehow reflected in Yannaras' political community. Hence, I proposed a way of interpreting Yannaras' own political freedom that allows freedom to be understood as a form of imitation of the Trinitarian, metaphysical freedom. This way of life involves no-one compelling another person to do or be what they do not freely accept to do or be. I connected this idea with some conceptions of political freedom and autonomy. Hence, I summarized Yannaras' position stating that *agape* is a sign of absolute freedom (the freedom to exist).

Building on these insights, I believe it would be fair to point out that Yannaras would agree with critical pedagogues who understand *agape* as a motivation for the political. In my view, it would be plausible to think that Yannaras' *agapeic* citizens who strive

to imitate the Trinitarian mode of *agape*, wish to think and act out of *agape*. To be sure, I do not suggest that Yannaras would embrace the critical pedagogy model without any objections. For instance, I believe that Yannaras would distance himself from what I described as two of the most important sources from which some critical pedagogues who write on motivational love draw: the works of King and Guevara. In my view, Yannaras would probably agree with King in that we should take our political stance motivated by love. On the other hand, however, he would not share King's pacifism. As I argued in Chapter 3, Yannaras must be conceived as a Christian anarchist, who would reject the pacifist tendencies of Christian anarchists such as Tolstoy. Hence, what is true about Tolstoy's case also applies to Martin Luther King's commitments.

Moreover, we must keep in mind that King's pacifist stance is also based on a very specific interpretation of Jesus' call for *agape*, a view not present in Yannaras' work. King thought "that at the very root of love is the power of redemption" (King, 2000, p. 321). Even though he does not offer a detailed analysis of this perspective, understanding why, according to King, an *agapeic* activist stance can be effective despite its "non-violent" (ibid., p. 323) nature, is hardly possible without taking this dimension into account:

> Here's the person who is a neighbor, and this person is doing something wrong to you and all of that. Just keep being friendly to that person. Keep loving them […]. And by the power of your love, they will break down under the load. That's love, you see. It is redemptive, and this is why Jesus says love. (ibid., p. 321-322)

The absence of any pacifist tendency in Yannaras' political philosophy does not necessarily entail disagreement with such a conception of *agape*. Yet, even if there was a full agreement, the authors' views about the political implications of this type of *agape* would still be profoundly different.

Apart from King, Yannaras would also probably keep some distance from Guevara's views, for more obvious reasons. Although, like Guevara, Yannaras would not embrace King's pacifism, and thus would be happy with the idea of love as a motivation for political (even revolutionary) struggles, I think that Yannaras would not go as far as to classify Guevara as an *agape* theorist per se, as suggested by some in the literature. For instance, Žižek does not hesitate to describe Guevara's love by the term "agape" (2010, p. 108), relying on the fact that, unlike "eros," (ibid., p. 108) Guevara's revolutionary love must be directed towards all humans ("love of the people"; ibid., p. 108). Yet, given that Yannaras has his own, detailed analysis of *agape* that is founded in a deeply theological context, I think that he would not rush to agree with Žižek's commentary. To cut the long story short, his position would be different from Guevara as Yannaras writes about a profoundly Christian concept.

Apart from Yannaras' agreement with critical pedagogues with respect to the notion of "motivation," there is another, important dimension that I would like to add to the discussion. According to this approach, Yannaras' Trinitarian theory of education, founded upon the notion of *agape*, can make some significant contributions to the approaches of critical pedagogues like Freire, hooks, Peter McLaren, Kennedy and Grinter, and T.B. Sales. More specifically, I believe that a crucial reminder for those who link *agape* in education and politics is that human *agape* should take the Trinitarian *agape* as its model. It is from this Trinitarian model that humans learn to practice *agape*. The idea of *agape* as motivation for certain political and educational practices should

be accompanied by the concept of the Trinity. Before applying *agape* to human affairs, Yannaras would emphasise the Trinitarian *agapeic* prototype.

To be sure, this does not mean that all critical pedagogues underemphasise the idea that *agape* is linked to the Trinity. As I pointed out, Yannaras' ontological conception of *agape* stems from his literal interpretation of John's "God is love' (1 John 4:8). Like numerous other Christian theologians, Yannaras conceptualises *agape* as divine using this specific passage. This passage has certainly caught the attention of some critical pedagogues. For instance, focusing on this specific sentence, bell hooks seems to acknowledge that there is some relation between *agape* and the divine. In her *All about love*, she quotes King's reference to this specific passage (hooks, 2001, p. 75), yet she also seems to refer to it in a much more personal tone: "My belief that God is love - that love is everything, our true destiny - sustains me. I affirm these beliefs through daily meditation and prayer, through contemplation and service, through worship and loving kindness" (ibid., p. 83).

In a slightly more theologically informed manner than hooks', T.B. Sales writes about John's *agape* that: "in tandem with holiness, it is the definitive attribute of God, and thus should be the defining factor of the children of God: "let us love one another, for love is from God ... for God is love" (1 Jn 4:7-8)" (Sales, 2020, p. 237). Even though hooks' reference is not accompanied by any explanation of the way she perceives this excerpt, Sales must be conceived as a critical pedagogy scholar who does not use the term "definitive attribute" in an ambiguous way. Instead, drawing from the work of Colin Grant, it is evident that Sales places himself on the long list of thinkers who favor the ontological conception of *agape* when it comes to God (in chapter 3 I referred to writers like Origen, Maximos the Confessor, Pannennberg, etc.). In his own terms:

> To alter the definition of love as presented in the New Testament would be to alter the very Gospel itself, as noted by Grant (2000), who argues, "from the perspective of the Gospel, *agape* is a reality before it is an ideal. It reflects the basic reality of God. It is because God is *agape* that we are challenged to pursue that way" (pp. 186–187). (Sales, 2020, p. 238)

To the best of my knowledge, unlike some thinkers of the theological trajectory I discussed (e.g. Pannenberg, 2004, p. 427), Sales does not go so far as to use the term "essence" to describe *agape*. However, I believe that the fact that he uses Grant's distinction between "ideal" and "reality" needs to be understood as an indication that Sales adopts this specific view. Hence, one could argue that Sales is much more explicit than hooks when it comes to the relation between *agape* and the divine, and he is probably the critical pedagogy theorist whose ideas resemble Yannaras' the most.

In my view, Yannaras' contribution is that his ideas can serve as a good reminder for authors like Paulo Freire, Peter McLaren, or Kennedy and Grinter, that human *agape* should learn from its prototype, the Trinitarian *agape.* In the Trinitarian context, *agape* represents a significantly broader concept that refers to the Trinitarian mode of being. Moreover, when it comes to works such as hooks', I believe that Yannaras would add that John's passage should not be used without any explanation of the term *agape*, as this can cause a great deal of confusion. For the idea that "God is love" could be interpreted as a poetic passage, that is, as a literary way for someone to say that God loves. In other words, it could be understood as an *exclusively* ethical concept and not an ontological notion; and as Nichols' description implies (1999, p. 191) this is something that Yannaras would find problematic. As I pointed out, T.B. Sales' position is different in the sense that he refers explicitly to the ontological interpretation of

John's excerpt. In my view, Yannaras' philosophy of education could be useful for Sales because, as I argued, it is grounded in the idea that the ontological foundation of *agape* must be understood in its Trinitarian dimension. In simpler terms, the idea that "God is love", implies that God is tri-personal and presupposes that *agape* is what renders this mode of existence divine.

Another important addition that, in my view, flows from Yannaras' conception of apophaticism is that, as humans, we are incapable of fully understanding the divine *agape.* In other words, in my view, what Yannaras calls "the fundamentally inaccessible mode of divine existence […]" (Yannaras, 2007b, p. 253) applies to *agape* as well. In my interpretation, instead of trying to fully capture how the intra-Trinitarian relations operate, Yannaras' position would be that, to realise *agape*, humans should try to examine Jesus' example itself. Hence, I think that Yannaras would probably embrace John Milbank's Christological approach, according to which *agape* is understood "as fully defined by Christ's words and actions" (Milbank, 2006, p. 240). According to Milbank's description, humans must "[…] 'repeat' precisely what Jesus did in practice, but in different historical circumstances […]" (ibid., p. 240).

Take the example of Jesus' prayer. Jesus prays to his Father asking to skip his passion and death (Matthew 26: 38-43 as cited in Yannaras, 2016, p. 37). As Yannaras points out, Jesus feels "πανικό [panic]" (ibid., p. 37) and "τρόμο [terror]" (ibid., p. 37). Eventually, as Yannaras reminds us, Jesus consents to his Father's plan (Yannaras, 2016, p. 40), realising a type of " αὐτοπαράδοση [self-surrender]" (ibid., p. 40) that, according to Yannaras, is "ἐλεύθερη, δηλαδὴ ἐρωτικὴ [free, that is, loving]" (ibid., p. 40). In this specific case, Jesus' behaviour allows us to reach at least *some* conclusions about the loving relation between Jesus and the Father (e.g. self-sacrifice, trust). In other words, I believe that Yannaras' work offers us an interesting way of conceiving *agape* that

combines commitment to apophaticism with commitment to Christology. I take this to be a valuable insight for the critical pedagogues who understand the notion of *agape* as a motivation for the political. From this Yannarian perspective, *agape* is something that we are called to practice by focusing on Christology, partly because we cannot fully understand the Divine mode of existence. A proper description of *agape* as a motivation for the political must be followed by the idea that humans strive to understand what *agape* is*,* by focusing on Jesus. In critical pedagogy, it seems that this view aligns with Sales' commitment to John's *agape,* which "in tandem with holiness, it is the definitive attribute of God, and thus should be the defining factor of the children of God: "let us love one another, for love is from God ... for God is love" (1 Jn 4:7-8)" (Sales, 2020, p. 237).

Another important point that I think that one can extract from Yannaras' idea of Trinitarian *agape* has to do with the idea of *kenosis.* In my interpretation of Yannaras' inner freedom (Chapter 2) I argued that *kenosis* applies both to Jesus and to humans. According to the argument I presented, Yannaras' explanation of Jesus' prayer to his Father (where he asks to avoid his torture and cruel death) involves the idea of trust. As I pointed out, Yannaras defines *kenosis* as the act of one's giving one's whole life "στον Θεό [to God]" (2016, p. 48), which means entrusting this life to God. I argued that for Yannaras, Jesus' prayer shows that Jesus loves his Father. As I noted, Yannaras describes *kenosis* as the act of one giving one's whole life "στον Θεό [to God]" (2016, p. 48), which means entrusting this life to God. In other words, just as Jesus trusted his Father and proceeded with the Father's plan, humans must also act in a similar manner. Hence, according to my interpretation, the *agapeic* relation between the two Persons of the Trinity implies that humans must entrust their lives to God's hands and pursue God's will.

In my view, this approach is particularly important for critical pedagogues such as Freire and McLaren. As I showed, both authors conceive of the notion of *agape* as a motivation for political, revolutionary struggles aiming at things such as the overthrowing of capitalism. According to my interpretation, Yannaras' conception of *kenosis*, grounded in Trinitarian *agape*, implies that critical pedagogues should avoid becoming obsessed with such political purposes. While *agape* can serve as a motivation for the establishment of liberatory politics, the notion of *kenosis* invites us to think that every human endeavour should be accompanied by a sense of trust in God's will for humanity. The critical pedagogue motivated by *agape* must not become obsessed with their revolutionary goals; their chief aim should be to discover God's will and actualise it. In other words, they should be open even to the possibility that God's plan for humanity might turn to be slightly (or entirely) different from their own political visions and perspectives of what is good and just. In other words, the person who is motivated by *agape* must certainly follow what they believe is right for politics. However, they should keep in mind that God is an indispensable part of human history, but also that God speaks to humans in many different ways. Sometimes a commitment to what is right and just in politics may lead to a type of obsession that is entirely incompatible with the *agape* that leaves room for God to act in human history – often in unique and unpredictable ways. Proper, *kenotic agape* embraces the vision for a more just, human society – implicit in the works of so many critical pedagogues – provided that this type of vision does not leave God out of the plan.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this thesis can be summarised by the following paragraphs.

1) The first conclusion is that Yannaras can be read as a philosopher who has his own views about education. This is also one of the central contributions of my thesis. Although many of Yannaras' references to education are related to his own criticisms against the Greek Education (from the 1980's onwards), I argued that Yannaras adopts a broader conception of what education should aim at and that his criticism against the Greek Education can help us identify it. Hence, I described the Yannarian educational goals as non-egocentric and as political, in the sense that education should aim at the creation of citizens who trust God and try to realise the will of God. As I showed, these concepts are present in his criticism of the Greek education as well. I also argued that his reflection involves two other aims: the first is the development of critical thought, while the second refers to what I termed "captivating courses."

2) Another conclusion is that if we choose to understand Yannaras' philosophy of education based on Yannaras' wider philosophical and theological commitments (the method I followed in this thesis), then there are at least three points that we should infer:

(i) We must arrive at a Yannarian notion which I termed "the loving citizen." Based on the interpretation I offered, we should conclude that one of the aims of Yannarian education should be the creation of this kind of citizen. This is the citizen of Yannaras' anarchist political community that aims to imitate the Trinity – a citizen who is a politically free and autonomous subject.

(ii) This citizen does not love in any sense of the term. Specifically, this citizen is an *agapist*. In Yannaras' work, the notion of agape possesses some features that are usually found in other philosophical and theological analyses on the concept as well (such as self-sacrifice). In my interpretation of Yannaras' theological thought, this type of agape must be understood as having a strong relation with critical thought – especially when it comes to its self-sacrificial aspect.

(iii) In my interpretation of Yannaras' work, the idea of the Trinity must be conceived as an indispensable part of the Yannarian approach to

education, since it helps us conceive of the very politics that this education should aim at, as well as of the term *agape*. I also pointed out that the idea of Trinitarian *agape* is linked to the idea of freedom—a type of freedom that must not be conceived of as being irrelevant to politics.

3) What I described as the Yannarian approach to education can be improved in various ways. I employed the work of different authors that, according to my reading, can help this theory become better. The conclusions of my analysis can be summarised as follows:

i) To assess the Yannarian theory I suggested, I asked whether the idea of the "loving citizen" was adequately precise and thorough. I focused on the concept of love. The conclusion was that, since it is clear that Yannaras refers to *agape* specifically, his notion of love was quite precise. However, based on my interpretation of Montessori's work, I argued that Yannaras' conception of the notion of *agape* can become even more precise. Specifically, I argued that Montessori's work can provide Yannaras with a very specific example of what it means for love to respect freedom and autonomy: love must respect these two when love attempts to serve the needs of the beloved.

ii) Furthermore, my assessment focused on the relationship between *agape* and critical thought. In my thesis, I argued that throughout Yannaras' work, one can trace a link between the two. According to my evaluation, one way in which this idea can be improved is by the addition of another idea: the relationship between *agape* and critical thought goes beyond the idea of self-sacrifice. Critical thought, in my reading, applies to other aspects of *agape* as well, being a very useful (if not an entirely necessary) skill for the *agapist.* In other words, I believe that, from this critical comment on the nature of *agape*, Yannaras' *agapeic* citizen can be understood more thoroughly. Education should aim at creating an *agapeic* person who must be able to think critically especially because *agape* demands this critical skill in various circumstances.

iii) Following the previous assessment, I employed Martha Nussbaum's insights. I argued that Nussbaum's views on patriotism can improve the Yannarian approach I defended, by offering a valuable link among education, critical thought and love. In simpler terms, I pointed out that Yannaras' theory can be improved on a specific point: I argued that Yannaras wants education to create future citizens. These citizens should be *agapists*. Also, I argued that Yannaras believes that education must aim to develop critical thought. Hence, from this, we need to assume that Yannaras wants a citizen who is also a critical thinker. Yet, as I have also pointed out, in Yannaras' case, we must think that there is a link between *agape* and critical thought. In my view, Nussbaum's ideas on patriotism and education are valuable because they help us think that the two educational goals must be conceived as connected to one another: It is (partly) *because* education should aim at the creation of an *agapist* that the development of critical thought is relevant. To be sure, the *agape* task is not the only reason why education should aim at critical thought. Yet, in my view, the Yannarian approach I developed can be improved if we add that the *agape* task is at least *one* reason why critical thought must be conceived as an important educational aim in the Yannarian context. From this perspective, it is partly because we educate for *agape* that we should educate for critical thought.

iv) Furthermore, in my discussion I used Hannah Arendt's philosophy of education. Arendt's insights are valuable because they can improve the Yannarian approach I defended in the first part. I concluded that the Yannarian approach must be also accompanied by a very significant idea related to the political role of the teachers. I argued that the teachers who participate in Yannarian education must be conceived of as persons committed to preparing future, *agapist* citizens. As I showed, one can certainly reach some conclusions about these teachers based on Yannaras' theological ideas (e.g. we can imagine that these teachers will love in an *agapeic* manner), but also from his educational references (e.g. these teachers should offer captivating learning experiences to their

students). However, these elements do not refer to the political. The Arendtian model of the teacher helped me suggest some ways in which this approach can be enhanced (e.g. her notion of "responsibility" is particularly valuable). For instance, I argued that given the Yannarian teacher is a citizen of a political community that is governed by a unanimous type of democracy, this teacher should not hesitate to let their students know that they hold themselves accountable for the political problems of the community. In other words, despite conceiving of the relation between love and politics in a profoundly anti-Yannarian way, Arendt's view of the world-loving teacher can be valuable for the Yannarian approach.

v) Another conclusion of my assessment is that the Yannarian approach can be valuable for some critical pedagogy discussions, as it is founded upon the notion of Trinitarian *agape.* I argued that critical pedagogues often describe the notion of love (*agape* included) as a motivation. Yannaras' *agapeic* Trinitarianism can help critical pedagogues conceive of the *agapeic* person as someone who aims at imitating the Trinity by focusing on Jesus' example, but also as someone who must aim at discovering and realising the will of God in their lives.

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